PLACES

The High Line

Placemark Award

CHELSEA MINI STORAGE 564-7735

About the cover:
Joel Sternfeld's photographs of the High Line, an unused railroad viaduct in Manhattan, evoke unexpected layers of time and urban form.

Where is today's public space, people ask. City Hall square? The shopping mall? The Internet? The car wash?

Where, you might better ask, is the public? Or even better: When are we (or they) the public?

CONTENTS

Surely we need to clarify our conceptions of what constitutes public life and to make some useful distinctions, such as that between public life and community life, as Mike Brill argues in this issue.

In thinking about public spaces, we need to look more broadly for the sorts of places where people encounter real differences, exchange conceptions of value (however implicit) and generally form their notions of what it is to be one person among many, and, for that matter, to be in one place among the traces of many times.

We also need to look with more ingenuity at how the many spaces that make up a city can be shaped not only to serve, but also to enhance, the life outside our everyday living and working environments. Purpose-built, deliberately shaped public spaces remain essential elements of an urban infrastructure, central to the construction of a city's identity. Yet the qualities of the full fabric of spaces that are built within and around both public and private institutions structure the underlying discourse of a city. Streets, alleys, small gathering spots and informal places of assembly, even parking lots and sports venues enter more ubiquitously into the lives of their citizens and condition the nature of their exchange.

If the spaces we form are intended to help transform encounter into community, then they also need to sustain our attention and stay in the mind. They must be distinct enough to remember and refer to as common ground, easy enough to use and access that they are experienced by many, and have elements in them that will encourage exchange among users.

This issue presents a number of approaches to the consideration of such issues, ranging from the re-evaluation of open spaces that zoning incentives spread through New York City in the name of the public, to questions about how new forms might better be derived from the mix of ways in which people use open space.

It also brings into focus the role of private institutions in structuring the spaces that are available for common access. Public agencies have become increasingly intertwined with businesses and non-profit organizations in the creation of the spaces that we move through in our daily lives. Often the results of such collaborations are places that we now consider to be quite memorable and desirable, and which would even rank high on a scale of places where public encounter happens.

With this issue we also announce the presentation of the PlaceMark Award to the architect Hugh Hardy, of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates in New York. Hardy has for decades contributed not only to the public life of the city through a continuing series of projects, but also helped to change the understanding of what architects must do to reach out to nurture complex financial, organizational and artistic relationships that support and extend the life of a place. His work shuns dogma and instead captures the spirits of time and place, often through acknowledging and giving vigorous new life to the imaginative legacy of previous generations. He sees promise where others see restriction, proffers bravado when others are cowed, and stewards the qualities of place with a fertile imagination and a fearlessly unconventional sense of propriety. We would all do well to pay attention to his example.

As citizens or designers, we enter public life when we move beyond comfortable and defined roles. If we take public spaces to be those where we deliberately come upon others with whom we may or may not have common interests and with whom we may or may not agree, then such spaces need be readily accessible to all. They need also to present qualities that many different kinds of people will enjoy. And maybe, just maybe, they need to catch us by surprise.

Where is the public? In spirited places.

When are we (or they) the public? When we (and they) are induced to care.

—*Donlyn Lyndon*
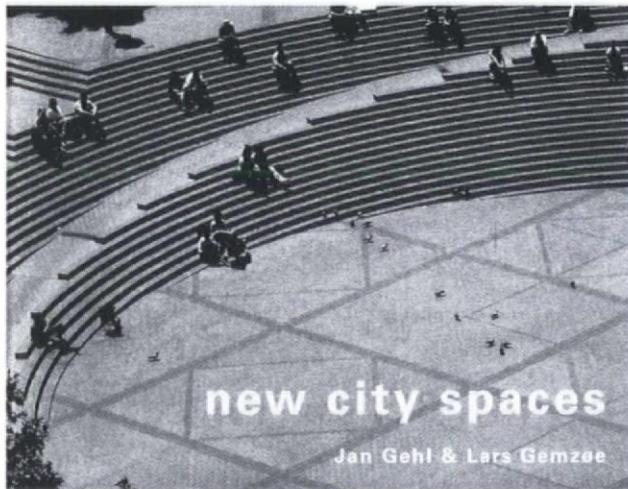
Review: If You Build It …
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, *New City Spaces*,
(Copenhagen: Danish Architectural Press, 2000)

There seems to have been no shortage of hand-wringing in recent years about the decline of public open space—the plazas, squares, parks and streets that are the classic elements of the traditional public realm—and public life. Yet few debates have been characterized by the confusion of passion, romanticism and multiple reference points as this one has, especially in regard to American cities.

The basic construction of the argument suggests that there was a golden age of public space and public life to which we might return, or at least refer, though when that might have been is rarely stated explicitly. In fact, it might be more constructive to regard public space and public life

as evolving conditions, and to hope always for spaces that expand, rather than contract, possibilities for public life.

In *New City Spaces*, Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, students of and advocates for the remarkable transformation of Copenhagen's downtown streets and squares over the last thirty years, offer an updated assessment of urban public spaces, primarily in Europe. (Their previous book, *Public Spaces, Public Life*, won an EDRA/*Places* Award for Place Research in 1998).

In the context of this debate, Gehl and Gemzøe's book makes important contributions. First, the authors set forth clearly and succinctly what they consider to be the fundamental roles of public space—meeting place, market place and thoroughfare—attributes that provide a sound starting point for any discussion about what's happening to the public realm.

Second, and just as importantly, the authors re-assert the critical relationship between public space and pedestrian life. They argue convincingly that the force acting most persistently against the cultivation of good public space is "car culture" (not the privatization of public space nor the exponential increase in telecommunication), precisely because it so thoroughly destabilizes pedestrian life. Conversely, the authors demonstrate the powerful ways in which good urban transit, which turns passengers into pedestrians at both ends of the trip, supports street life and public space—especially when coordinated with land-use policy.

Furthermore, Gehl and Gemzøe provide a useful description of the relationship between car culture, urban form, pedestrian life and public space by suggesting clear distinctions between traditional cities, "invaded cities" (whose urban pattern was established before the automobile but have been invaded by cars) and "abandoned cities" (whose physical form was established largely after the advent of automobiles, and which therefore

never developed a tradition of pedestrian life)—a differentiation that is sometimes easy to overlook. It is these latter cities, of course, that have the most difficulty in sustaining urban public spaces.

Finally, the book demonstrates convincingly that there are many cities in the world that, as a matter of will and public policy, have refused to give up on public space. It profiles nine cities which, it argues, have had more or less systematic policies of cultivating public space, and provides an album of thirty-nine significant public spaces built in those cities and elsewhere in recent years.

Yet *New City Spaces* has significant weaknesses. The case studies are wildly uneven. Portland (the only U.S. city among the nine profiled), admired by planners for many reasons, has added only a handful of significant public spaces (Pioneer Courthouse Square, riverfront parks) in the last quarter century; its greater success has been in maintaining a consistently walkable scale of streets downtown. A more convincing case could be made for San Francisco and the remarkable transformation of its Embarcadero; Chicago and its ambitious riverfront, schoolyard and park initiatives; or even New York's renewal of so many parks.

More fundamentally, the spaces profiled comprise a remarkable lack of diversity. Virtually no waterfront spaces, no parks and no streets are profiled (save streets that have been converted to pedestrian use). In demonstrating that traditional squares and plazas are still being built (the Danish title is *New City Rooms*), Gehl and Gemzøe miss the opportunity to explore the exapnding range of public spaces that cities are creating. In particular, their survey offers designers and planners in "abandoned cities" little to learn about.

The write-ups on the thirty-nine spaces are generally perfunctory. Disappointingly, the criteria for selecting or evaluating the spaces in the book are not made evident; there is not even a reflection on characteristics of market place,

meeting place and thoroughfare that are posited at the outset. There is no analysis (as opposed to description) of how any of the spaces are actually used, which is particularly ironic in that Gehl's first book, *Life Between Buildings*, published contemporarily with William H. Whyte's studies of New York City spaces, underscored the importance of understanding human perception and use of space. Even for designers working on the increasing number of small urban spaces being reclaimed from parking or traffic circulation, there is a dearth of useful information about the construction, management and ownership of the spaces.

Nevertheless, *New City Spaces* offers numerous pleasures. One of them is the exuberance, inventiveness and appropriateness of so many of the design details. The light standards in Plaça del Sol (Barcelona), the variable lighting schemes for Rathausplatz (St. Pölten, Austria) and the effective combination of tree plantings, surfacing and public art in Bismarckplatz (Heidelberg) are worth keeping in mind.

The graphics, which present plans of the cities and public spaces at the same scale throughout the book, make for easy comparisons. Such attention to the legibility of graphic information is still, surprisingly, rare in books like this.

New City Spaces renews our confidence in the potential for public space, reminds us of the spirit with which they can be designed and built, and suggests the pleasure they can offer. It reinforces important, fundamental principles about transit, pedestrian life and public space. But the book offers few concrete lessons about the art of designing new spaces or providing for them as an act of public policy, either in cities where traditional urbanism is still alive, or in the problematic places where such urbanism has never had a chance to take hold.

— *Todd W. Bressi*

New Life for an Old Plaza

Balsley Park is a prototype for the transformation of useless, barren urban plazas. It offers hope to the hundreds of such spaces in New York and elsewhere that could, if given a second chance, bring civic life and pride to the neighborhoods they have disappointed and scarred.

The park is at the corner of Ninth Avenue and 57th Street in Manhattan, an area where Clinton, a working-class neighborhood of walkups and workshops, gives way to Midtown, Columbus Circle and the institutional campuses of the West Side. Originally known as Sheffield Plaza, it was built in 1978 under zoning rules that granted extra development rights to projects that provided public spaces like plazas, arcades and galleries. Unlike most spaces of this type, the plaza was not adjacent to the project under whose auspices it was built, an apartment building nearly a half-block away.

The plaza failed almost immediately—partly because of its detachment from its sponsor building, partly because it was poorly maintained, partly because of its dependence on an amphitheater program for the space, which never sustained itself. One bright spot was a twice weekly farmers' market that had "become a neighborhood gathering place where the relationships between regular customers and long-time vendors have been cemented."[1]

The community pressured for change, but rejected the first two proposals for redesigning and reconstructing the space. The plaza owner, Adam Rose, then commissioned Thomas Balsley Associates to come up with a new plan, under the condition that the firm act as lead in the public approval process. The landscape architects worked with a local design committee, which helped establish a consensus on a new program ("a green park serving a broad constituency") and encouraged the designers to translate the programmatic elements into artistic gestures of form

Places to Linger

Plaza owners commonly discourage people from lingering in their spaces. Balsley Park invites people to stay: Retaining walls, movable cafe chairs and tables, benches and a grassy lawn offer visitors a variety of of places in which to sit or even lie down.

Corner Cafe

A cafe is at the corner, with service windows facing the terrace and the street; the owner pays no rent. The closest public restroom, though, is in a Starbucks a half-block away.

Balsley Park, pedestrian shortcut and cafe terrace
Photos courtesy Thomas Balsley Associates

A Satisfying Edge

The previous plaza had suffered from its ambiguous relationship to the adjacent building. The plaza butted against the building, with no functional connection to it, creating a lengthy dead zone.

The new design incorporates a multi-layered yet clear boundary for the park. Along the building edge, colorful ribbon wall panels alternate with screens made of pipes placed close to each other; behind them are evergreen trees. In front of the wall are transition spaces, such as a mound, garden and play area, that allow park users to occupy the edge. The combination of colors, materials and visual permeability creates a complex, layered edge that serves as a soft backdrop.

Sunlight and Shade

The openness of the central area, combined with the southerly slope and relatively low-rise buildings to the south, allow sunlight to stream into the park from midday onward. Trees and building edges create shade along the perimeter of the park; the high canopy of the bosque at the cafe terrace allows for views in and out.
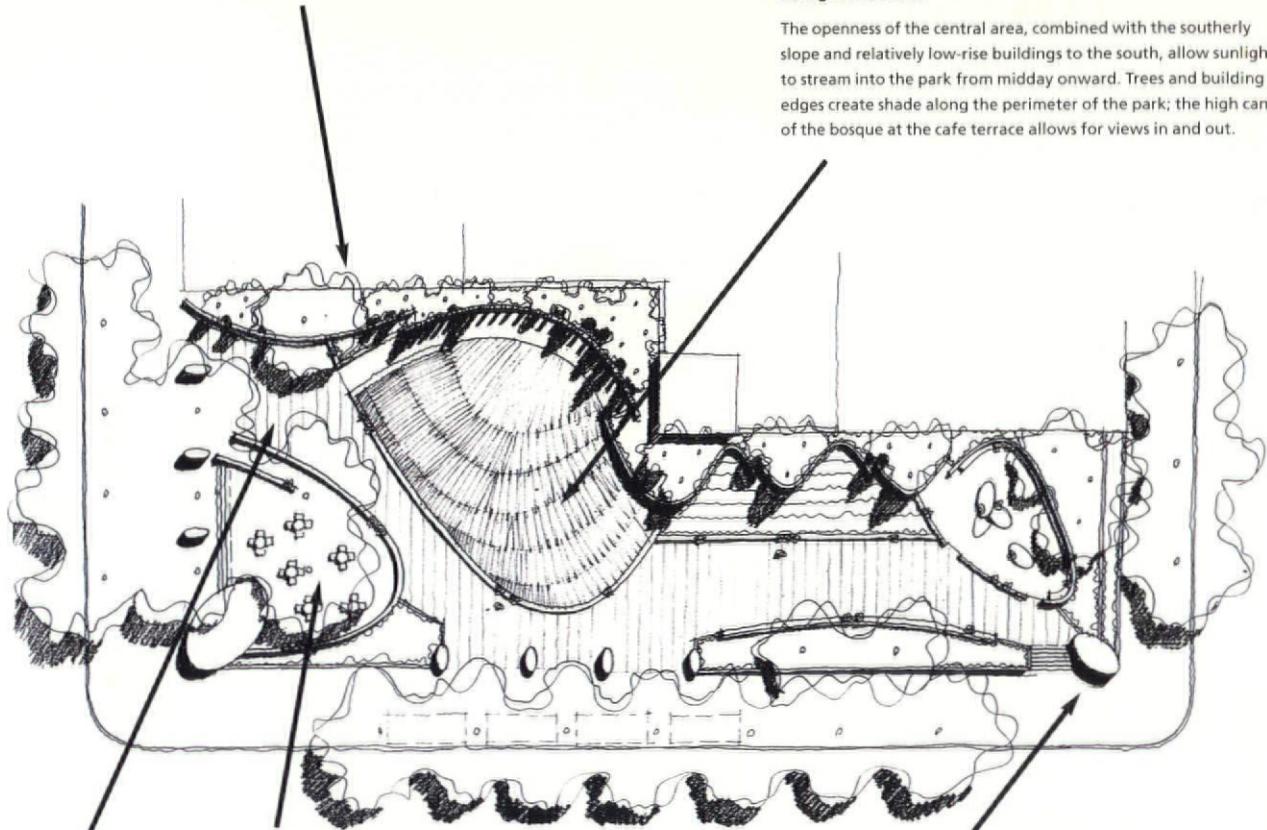
Places to See and be Seen

The site plan takes advantage of, and accentuates, the elevation changes in the park. The high points—the cafe terrace and mounded lawn—are designed as places that encourage people to stay and provide multiple vantages over the entire space.

Rooms and Halls

The park is laid out as a series of discrete spaces—cafe terrace, lawn, children's play area-connected by an allée and a diagonal walkway.

The diagonal short-cut for pedestrians walking between Ninth Avenue and 57th Street creates extra activity in the park: The north end lines up with a stop on a crosstown bus line; the shortcut also accommodates pedestrians heading from the Clinton neighborhood to a subway station one block east.

While the differentiation of functions allows the park to accommodate numerous activities, the differentiation of spaces from each other and from the street (with walls, fences and grade changes) creates a sense that the park is fragmented and cramped.

Limited Access

Originally, the city required urban plazas to remain open all the time. In exchange for commitments by private owners to upgrade their spaces, the city now allows the spaces to be closed at night. Thus the perimeter of Balsley Park has been hardened, with fences and planters along most of two sides and sliding and swinging gates closing off the entry points.

Balsley Park, site plan
after reconstruction
Courtesy Thomas Balsley
Associates
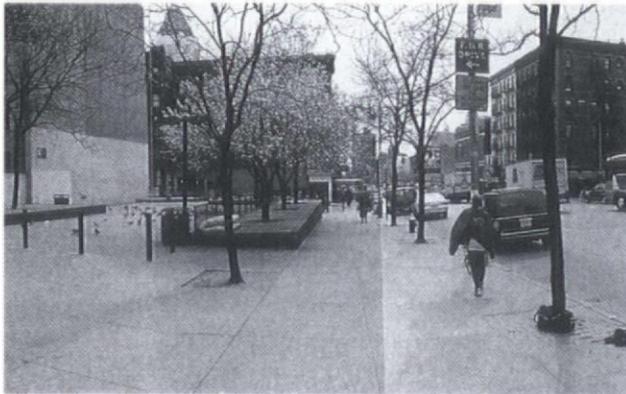
A Park, not a Plaza

The large, mounded lawn, perennial gardens and evergreen cypress plantings along the edges are meant to convey the notion that this is an urban park, not a plaza.

Top: Sheffield Plaza, before reconstruction

Bottom: Balsley Park, lawn and cafe terrace

Credits

Balsley Park
Location: Manhattan, 9th Ave. between 56th and 57th streets
Client: Rose Associates
Designer: Thomas Balsley Associates (Thomas Balsley, Steven Tupu)
Design: 1998-1999
Construction: 1999-2000
Cost: $1,000,000

and color that would strike a distinctive pose for this prominent corner.

Balsley's plan incorporates several design and programming strategies to help it accommodate a range of uses and users. The new park includes a children's play area, cafe terrace and lawn for sitting in the sun, as well as a transverse path that provides a short-cut from one street to the other (the presence of pedestrians reinforces a sense of activity in the park). The new park has room for the farmers' market and includes a new cafe at the corner, although early plans for bookselling stalls fell through.

Indeed, the park attracts a wide range of visitors—including neighborhood residents of all ages, from the elderly to children with their nannies; hospital staff, blue-collar workers and Midtown office workers; high school students and others—who come alone or in small groups. When the weather is right, it's a spot for lunching, meeting, sunning, reading, playing, enjoying an unexpected breeze or simply watching everyone else.

Like so many reborn public places, Balsley Park offers unexpected glimpses of the graces of urban life. One recent day, a maintenance worker meticulously wended his way through the park, picking up litter, dusting off the benches. Along the way, he paused to acknowledge each park visitor with a tip of his cap and a "good afternoon." It was a gentle, gracious act that conferred ownership of the place on park worker and park visitor alike, a moment of social connection that has blossomed from the web of agreements between owner and community, designer and user, that are the roots of the civic realm.

— *Todd W. Bressi*

Note

1. Jerold Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space, The New York City Experience* (New York: Wiley, 2000), 113-114.

Neighboring on a
New York City street

Photos courtesy
Project for Public Spaces

Eleven Ways to Turn a Place Around

Thirty years ago in New York City, the primary activities of a neighborhood took place in its streets—on stoops and sidewalks, next to fire hydrants and in empty lots. Very little neighboring took place in the city's parks, markets or civic spaces, because these more traditional public spaces were either in disrepair or simply not available. In cities where people still gathered, they gravitated to the historic places built prior to World War II, because the newer public spaces were either non-existent or unusable. It was a sad, deeply disturbing time, yet highly motivating for those of us seeking to effect change.

The last half of the twentieth century was a devastating time for public spaces of all kinds—from grand city parks and plazas to neighborhood greens and town squares to downtown main streets everywhere. Suburbanization drained urban areas of many of their families, and urban renewal razed much of what was left, abetted by designers focused on creating objects, and city agencies interested in advancing the narrow agendas of their departments.
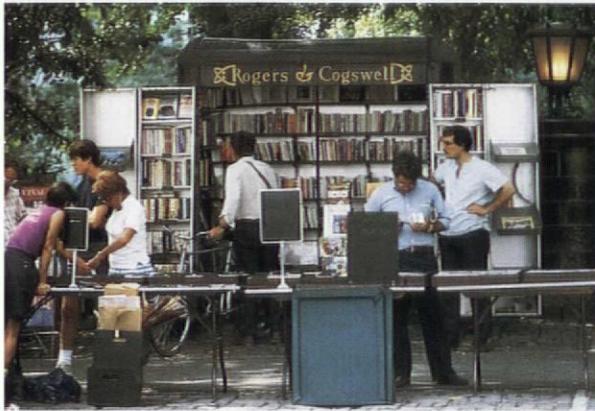
Short-term activities, such as markets and booksellers, can attract people to a space and build a constituency for it.

Watch what people do, as well as what they say, when evaluating a public space.

As a result, many cherished public spaces have been destroyed while opportunities to create new ones have been fumbled. We must do a better job of learning from these mistakes, and work harder to create new spaces in the context of the dramatic changes now taking place in American cities.

But the good news is that we are making progress. Citizens, civic leaders, designers and public space managers are rediscovering the art of making public spaces, recovering lost lessons and creating new community frameworks, visions and technical strategies that enable public spaces to succeed.

The principles outlined in this article represent our view of what it takes to reverse this destructive process, to repair unsatisfactory places and create great new ones. The key to the equation is to focus on making places: cultivating constituencies for a place, learning from them,

designing to support them, and allowing the place to evolve in incremental steps that incorporate feedback and accommodate unexpected energies and opportunities. This approach, we believe, can create thriving civic and neighborhood places, whether they are streets, transit hubs, parks, plazas or libraries.

1. *The community is the expert.* The people who live or work near a place know from experience which areas are comfortable, which are dangerous and why; where children can safely walk, ride bikes or play; and where traffic moves so fast that people are discouraged from walking along or crossing a street. Unfortunately, people are rarely asked to contribute this information to the planning and design process. It's hard to imagine how much human knowledge and experience has been lost because we haven't figured out how to use it in a meaningful way, or simply haven't asked.

2. *You are creating a place—not a design.* When people describe a place they enjoy, they use words like "safe," "fun," "charming" and "welcoming." These types of adjectives describe the intangible qualities of a true place—the kind of place people talk about, and return to over and over. Intangible qualities can be measured quantitatively in a variety of ways, by using existing statistics or by conducting research, although experience has shown that such measurements have their limitations. In researching more than 1,000 public spaces around the world, we have found four key qualities of successful public spaces: accessibility, activities, comfort and sociability.

The central question is what the role of design is in creating a place. From our experience, placemaking requires a much broader approach than most designers use. Creating a place depends more on effective management than it does design and requires the involvement of many different disciplines because of the extremely complex issues that need to be addressed.

For example, good maintenance and effective security are important to the success of a place, and require attentive design at the outset as well as focused, ongoing management. But it is just as important for a place to be accessible by foot and by public transportation, which might require coordination with other agencies and projects.

3. *You can't do it alone.* A good public space requires more resources and expertise than any one individual or organization can offer. Partners can contribute innovative ideas, financial support or in-kind goods and services. They can help by collaborating on activities such as joint marketing, fundraising and security that are difficult to organize at the scale of a single public space. They can broaden the impact of a public space by coordinating with their own schedule for programming or improvement projects. And a strong partnership can move a project forward by giving it more political clout.

4. *They'll always say, "It can't be done."* Because government is compartmentalized and fragmented, public officials have a limited ability to deal with public spaces effectively. Every city has numerous agencies concerned with issues that impact public space, but no city has a single department or person responsible for developing and managing public places. And the professionals responsible for activities that impact public spaces—planning, traffic, transit, recreation and education, to name a few—often have larger mandates that make the creation of effective public spaces a secondary consideration. Therefore, when an idea stretches beyond the reach of an organization and an official says, "It can't be done," what that usually means is: "We've never done things that way before."

5. *You can see a lot just by observing.* When you observe a space, you learn about how it is actually used, rather than how you think it is used, whether the place is a small neighborhood park, a bus stop or a train station used by thousands of people each day. Methodical observations enable you to quantify what would otherwise be regarded as intuition or opinion.

By watching the ways people use spaces, you can also learn a lot about what they want from a space. People will often go to extraordinary lengths to use a space in the manner that suits them best. We have seen people use waste receptacles as places to sit, to sort through their mail or even to cook clams. Actions like these clearly speak louder than words, yet they frequently confound the designers and managers of public space.

6. *Develop a vision.* A vision for a public space essentially concerns the activities that will occur there. It follows, then, that a vision for a place should be defined by people who will use it, particularly those who live and work around it, rather than professionals or public agencies.

Every community has numerous people whose ideas can contribute to a vision for a place, if they
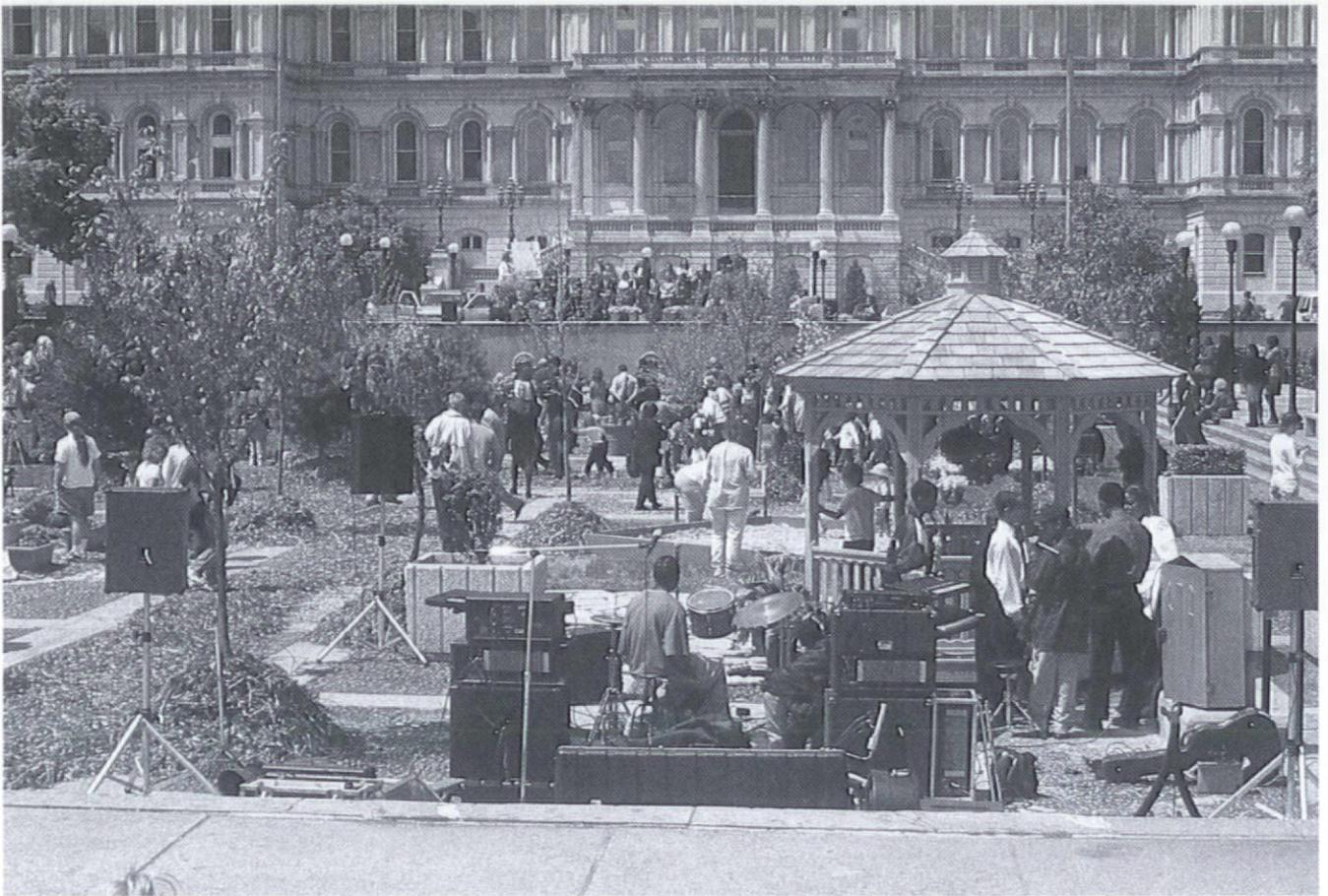
**New ideas for Baltimore's
City Hall plaza are tested.**

are asked. Professionals can help bring forth these ideas by asking people to think about other places they have been to and enjoyed, and talking with them about the activities that occur in those places and the physical elements that support them. Pictures of successful spaces (and even unsuccessful ones) are a good way of eliciting more discussion about the activities (or lack thereof) in a space, and they can help illustrate physical elements, character, types of management and so forth.

7. *Form supports function.* Although design is a critical ingredient in creating public spaces, the most successful spaces grow out of an understanding of how the community will use the space. Drawing on the talents and vision of the community does not have to mean foregoing a strong design statement. If a designer pays attention to the activities or uses that space should or could support, it will greatly contribute to the strength of the project.

The reality is that in most cases, it is not until after a space is built that much thought is given to how people will use it. In fact, a good deal of retrofitting goes on in failed public spaces simply because the function was never seriously considered at the outset. In this respect, we believe that the designer, by following and incorporating the needs articulated by the community, can ultimately make the design of the space more attractive, more interesting to look at and be in because it will be used.

8. *Triangulate.* Triangulation means locating elements in a way that greatly increases the chances of activity occurring around them, so that the use of each builds off the other. For example, a bench, a trash receptacle and a telephone placed near each other at a bus stop create synergy because together, they offer more chances for activity than if they were isolated from each other. Or, if a children's reading room in a new library were located next to a playground in a park

Experiments help determine how a public space will work after it is redesigned. Traffic officials plan for the narrowing of a park road in Portland, Maine.
Courtesy City of Portland

with a food kiosk, more activity would occur than if these facilities were sited separately.

9. *Start with the petunias.* Placemaking requires more than long-term planning and large-scale changes. Many great plans become bogged down because they are too big, cost too much and take too long to happen. Short-term actions, like planting flowers, can be a way of not only testing ideas, but also giving people confidence that change is occurring and that their ideas matter.

For example, we were working in a downtown park that needed a complete capital restoration to restore its vitality. Since this would be an expensive, long-term campaign, a preliminary step was to set up a book market in small tent structures around the park's perimeter. This experiment gave confidence to the organization managing the park's restoration and demonstrated that retail uses would draw people and animate the park. When the park was finally reconstructed several years later, other types of retail uses were included in its management plan.

Good public spaces don't happen overnight and people don't have all the answers at the outset. The key is to provide for flexibility—to grow the space by experimenting, evaluating and incorporating the lessons into the next steps.

10. *Money is not the issue.* All too often, the lack of money is used as an excuse for doing nothing. In fact, we'd venture to say that too much money might discourage the inventiveness, creativity and persistence required to create a great place. When money is the issue, this is generally an indication that the wrong concept is at work, not because the plans are too expensive, but because the public doesn't feel like the place belongs to them.

11. *You are never finished.* We estimate that about eighty percent of the success of any public space can be attributed to its management. No matter how good the design of a space is, it will never become a true place unless it is cared for well.

Management is critical because good places are not static; they change daily, weekly and seasonally. Given the certainty of change and the fluid nature in the use of a place at different times, the challenge is to develop the ability to respond effectively, and a good management structure will provide that flexibility.

— *Fred I. Kent, Andrew G. Schwartz*

Acknowledgment

PlaceMark Award: Hugh Hardy

The PlaceMark award is given by the directors of the Design History Foundation to a person who, through a distinguished career in design, has enriched our language of making places. This year, the board has chosen to recognize architect Hugh Hardy, partner in the firm Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer Associates in New York City.

Hardy is being recognized for his leadership in reviving a celebratory and shared spirit of American urbanism, particularly in New York City, but by extension throughout the nation. He has helped to create a realm of places that are public in the most profound way, carefully extending our cherished traditions and articulating them through design that embodies wit, wonder and the unassailable pleasure of public life.
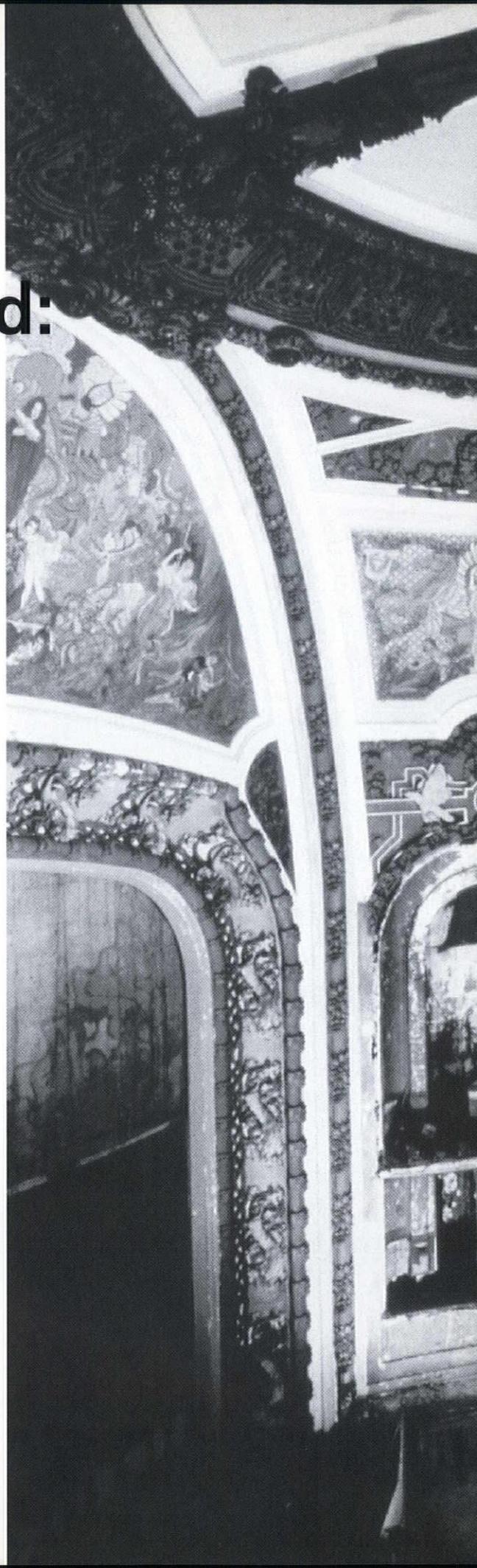
New Amsterdam Theatre interior,
before and after renovation
Courtesy Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Photo © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Public Spaces:
Partnership, Collaboration, Reclaiming

Hardy has established a model of public-spirited practice through his work with cultural institutions and public-private partnerships, as well as his passionate, persistent civic involvement. The following projects illustrate themes of collaboration and public–private partnership that are expanding the possibilities for urban public places—and characterize Hardy's, and HHPA's, engagement in civic placemaking.

The conventional wisdom is that our culture's interest in public space is waning. But I think something else is happening: American public space is evolving, and with this evolution has come a necessary diversification of the processes used to design and operate public space, and that, in turn, has revealed new opportunities for creating public space where there had been none before. Three themes—partnership, collaboration and reclaiming—underscore what is happening.

Partnership. The notion of public-private partnership is almost a cliché these days. Yet it is fundamentally important: You can't operate a city without public institutions, and those are in place because of private interests. Cities have a public realm and a private realm, and how these come together defines life in the city. At the most basic level, streets are public and the buildings that front them are usually private, and it is the interface between the two that makes a city work.

The possibility of a private organization assuming responsibility for a park or plaza seems laudable to me. That's why I found Bryant Park's public space so interesting. It doesn't just take care of itself: it is managed, programmed and paid for by a private entity. But the space is completely public, remarkable in its ability to absorb all kinds of people. It is what one hopes for in the city.

Part of a citizen's responsibility is to help take care of things. The thought that the government should do it all, even if there were enough public funds to do so, would not provide as good a result as we have now, where there are responsibilities both ways.

Collaboration. Working and living in a city is a form of exchange, a form of sharing interests in which each participant contributes something to the whole. City life depends on a sense of civility, you do have to stop at red lights, after all. That is the implicit bargain in the business of people living close together.

In architecture, working collaboratively helps strengthen your ideas. Design is a process of making choices. You start out with general questions, such as how should we organize this site, then proceed to specific ones, such as where is the front door? In a collaborative situation, you're forced to articulate what you're trying to do, and seeing other people's reactions helps you understand your own concerns. Some of the greatest projects in this city are the results of collaboration. Certainly Rockefeller Center is better than any one of the individual designers who worked on it could have done by themselves.

Reclaiming. One of the most fascinating opportunities in the design of public space is to make places accessible, especially to reclaim places that laymen or even professionals would not think are valuable. This theme is evident in all the projects featured here—from Bridgemarket to the James A. Farley/Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment, from Bryant Park to the 110th Street Streetscape, we are opening and reopening places that had fallen out of people's conception of the public city.

The restorations we've done are a reclaiming of a different sort, a reconnecting of people to the city's architectural and urban heritage. For us to do that, we have to be able to read the original design intent. Of course we really can't put ourselves in the designer or the architect's shoes,
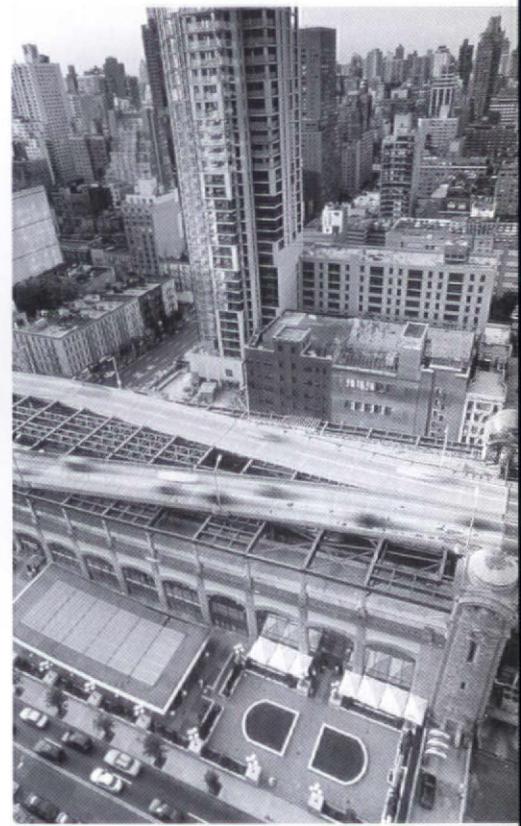
Left: Bryant Park.
Photo © Elliot Kaufman

Right: Urban sqaure at
Bridgemarket. Photo
© Peter Aaron/ESTO

but we can certainly capture the spirit of their thinking. I'm positive of that, because that's the nature of the whole creative life: We receive messages from our forebears through the work that is there, and hope to be sufficiently clear in creating new things that people in the future will understand what we were trying to do. That is, I suppose, a form of collaboration as well.

Public space is the city's highest achievement. Bringing people together from all walks of life, it represents an accomplishment that can have a great influence on the city experience. More than tall buildings, great density or competing interests, urban living finds its true expression in the places where people gather together. And now this generation has a new challenge: the renewal of Manhattan south of Canal Street. This ambitious task will rezquire resources, resolve and creativity on a scale that cannot be attempted without collaboration between public and private institutions. Even for New York, the immense scope of the challenge is unusual.

Southern Manhattan never had a great public gathering space. The World Trade Center's plaza was aloof and alien, more a symbol of power than a welcoming public place. Because of its raised height, above surrounding streets, the connections that would have made it part of the neighboring city were absent, and the looming vertical mass of the two towers made individuals seem puny and unimportant.

Now it is possible to establish new a connection between the trade center site and the city beyond; a new public space could be created, one that allows a variety of activities to take place day and night, season to season. Rather than establish a special preserve divorced from the city, this should be the place for a great public plaza, one filled with possibilities for contemplation or celebration, for cultural or commercial activities, for profound or foolish pursuits. This effort will require partnership, collaboration and reclaiming at a scale undreamed of before September 11. What better response could be imagined?

—*Hugh Hardy*

Dance Theatre of Harlem
Photo © James Morse

For twenty-five years, New York City has been clawing its way back from the depths of fiscal crisis, seemingly out-of-control crime and housing abandonment, and the near-collapse of its infrastructure. The turnaround was noticable to New Yorkers by the early 1990s—well before the election of the city's law-and-order mayor and Wall Street's late '90s boom—and was especially evident in the face of the city's public spaces.

Just as the proclamations of New York City's death were premature, so were the eulogies about the demise of its great public spaces. But just as New York is a different city from that of the booming post-war decades, so is the current notion of what public spaces are, and what it takes to make them succeed.

Nowadays, the city rarely takes on great public works itself, as it did in the days when Olmsted and Vaux oversaw the design and construction of Central and Prospect parks, or when Robert Moses created a vast realm of playgrounds, parks and beaches (as well as highways and housing projects).

Today the lines are blurred, with public-private partnership, community participation and inter-disciplinary collaboration creating a more complex process of building and managing public works. And this blurring suggests that between the extremes of public and private, there is a vast spectrum of places that share attributes of both. Paradoxically, it is this complication of matters that has so expanded the prospects for the civic realm.

More than most architects in the city, Hugh Hardy is associated with projects that are considered to be part of this revival of New York's civic realm. From historic theaters around Times Square, from the Rainbow Room to Radio City Music Hall at Rockefeller Center, from modest park facilities to performance and administrative spaces for cultural organizations located in neighborhoods outside Manhattan's cultural districts, Hardy and his firm, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, have again and again given impetus to New York's new civic landscape.

It's not just that Hardy and HHPA have had the right clients, it's also that their design sensibilities seem just right, connecting us to places in a manner that transcends the traps of nostalgia, doctrinaire preservation, corporate timidity and

Left: Radio City Music Hall
Photo by Whitney Cox,
© Radio City Music Hall Archives

Right: Joyce Theater, Chelsea
Photo © Norman McGrath

architectural iconoclasm into which so many similar projects fall. The Joyce Theatre jazzes up its Chelsea surroundings, sparking to the neighborhood rather than swamping it, as so many urban entertainment projects unfortunately do. The New Victory and New Amsterdam theaters actually calm Times Square down; they are two of a handful spaces in the area that encourage serious reflection about the role of architecture and public space in such a dynamic setting. Hardy's restoration teams somehow found more glory in the Rainbow Room and Radio City Music Hall than had been remembered, yet in subtle ways—what is it about the colors of the seat covers now, or of the new marquee lighting, that makes those places better than before? And the collaborations that revived Bryant Park, Herald Square and Greeley square respected the accumulated wisdom of numerous designers and researchers.

Then there are the projects that aren't yet on the public agenda. In those cases, civic design activism is called for. In these pages, Hardy has highlighted two of the projects he has helped champion: a new streetscape for 110th Street in Harlem, and the reclamation of the High Line, an abandoned elevated railway in Chelsea, for public open space. The first project extends the reach of New York's revival to a place that has not so readily enjoyed its benefits; the second challenges the prevailing agenda of tear-down-and-redevelop, offering a vision for a new kind of public space in the city.

Certainly, edgier, bolder, more visionary proposals for New York's public realm are advanced from time to time. Hardy's work is remarkable in a different way. Again and again, it captures the moment, without forgetting that this is one moment among many, and that the architect is one voice among many. It coaxes more out of a place than we knew was there, and it claims for us more of city life than we thought we could expect.

—*Todd W. Bressi*

**New Amsterdam Theatre,
New Victory Theater**

The restoration of two historic theaters not only jump-starts Times Square's recent revival but also enables theater-goers to revel in the area's complex architectural history.
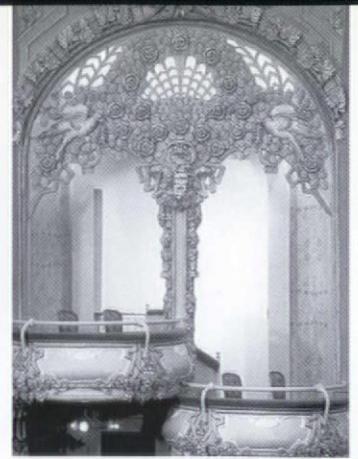
Top: New Amsterdam Theatre signage and interior detail reflect different eras of renovation. Left photo © Chris Lovi, right photo by Whitney Cox, © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Above: The new theatres, which face each other across the street, were among the first signs of change along redeveloping 42nd Street. Photo © Elliott Kaufman

Theater Row

A careful collaboration between theater companies, theater operators and a residential developer extends Times Square's renewal westward and strengthens its residential community.

After more than a decade of false starts, the Times Square redevelopment burst to life with the opening of the New Victory Theater in 1995 and the New Amsterdam Theatre in 1997. Hardy's "interpretive restorations" became touchstones for public discourse about Times Square's nature, conversations that until then had been colored by distant memories, nostalgia, even myth.

Before the completion of these theaters, the most visible manifestation of change at Times Square was the cacophony of signage erected under special Times Square zoning rules and an interim redevelopment plan for 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues—urban design initiatives that extrapolated, perhaps exaggerated, one of the brashest aspects of the area's history.

The restorations, instead, were true to the evolutionary nature of Times Square, not restoring the theaters to any one point in time, not elevating them to mythical status, but embracing the multiple layers of their history as evidenced in various architectural modifications, offering rich revelations of color, ornament and space.

Since then, redevelopment attention has turned to the surrounding area. Theater Row, a vibrant strip of tiny, experimental theaters two blocks west of Times Square, dates back more than twenty-five years, when small companies started leasing space in the block. A non-profit group subsequently purchased much of the blockfront and created a theater laboratory.
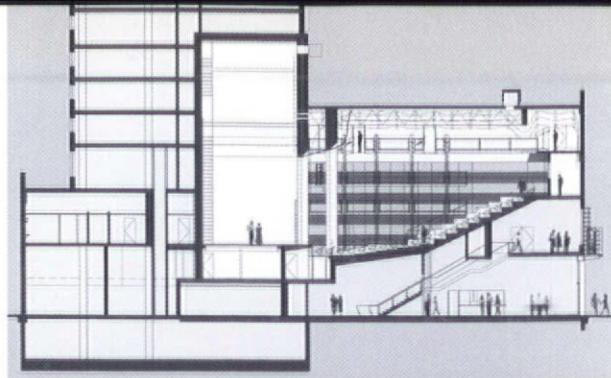
The current project includes the construction of six new theaters, varying in size from 99 to 499 seats, rehearsal studios and support spaces, all topped by a forty-one-story residential building, 420 West 42nd Street. Here the greatest architectural challenge was stitching the complex program together, juggling the needs of theater operators, actors, and future patrons and residents. Thus the block will continue as an incubator for productions, yet in fresher, more supportive facilities, and add to the life of the theater district by increasing the residential presence there.

Just as the Times Square redevelopment demonstrates the constellation of public, civic and private resources that must align to inspire urban regeneration, the Theater Row project is emblematic of the symbiotic relationship between the arts and urban development. Theater has colonized Times Square once and again; in recent years, the income from large real-estate projects has been increasingly necessary to underwrite spaces that afford artists full creative liberty. Not surprisingly, it is architecture that again strikes the bargain.

—*Todd W. Bressi*

Bridgemarket,
James A. Farley Building—Pennsylvania Station

Architectural visions inspire the
transformation of bypassed spaces
into civic and neighborhood amenities,
and keep the projects on course
through lengthy approval processes.

Amtrak's new station in
New York would recreate the
qualities of space and light,
and the experience of moving
between concourse and
platform, that characterized
the historic Penn Station.
Rendering by Skidmore,
Owings & Merrill. Courtesy
Pennsylvania Station
Redevelopment Corporation.

Above: The James A. Farley
Building/General Post Office
Photo © Farley Post Office
Archives
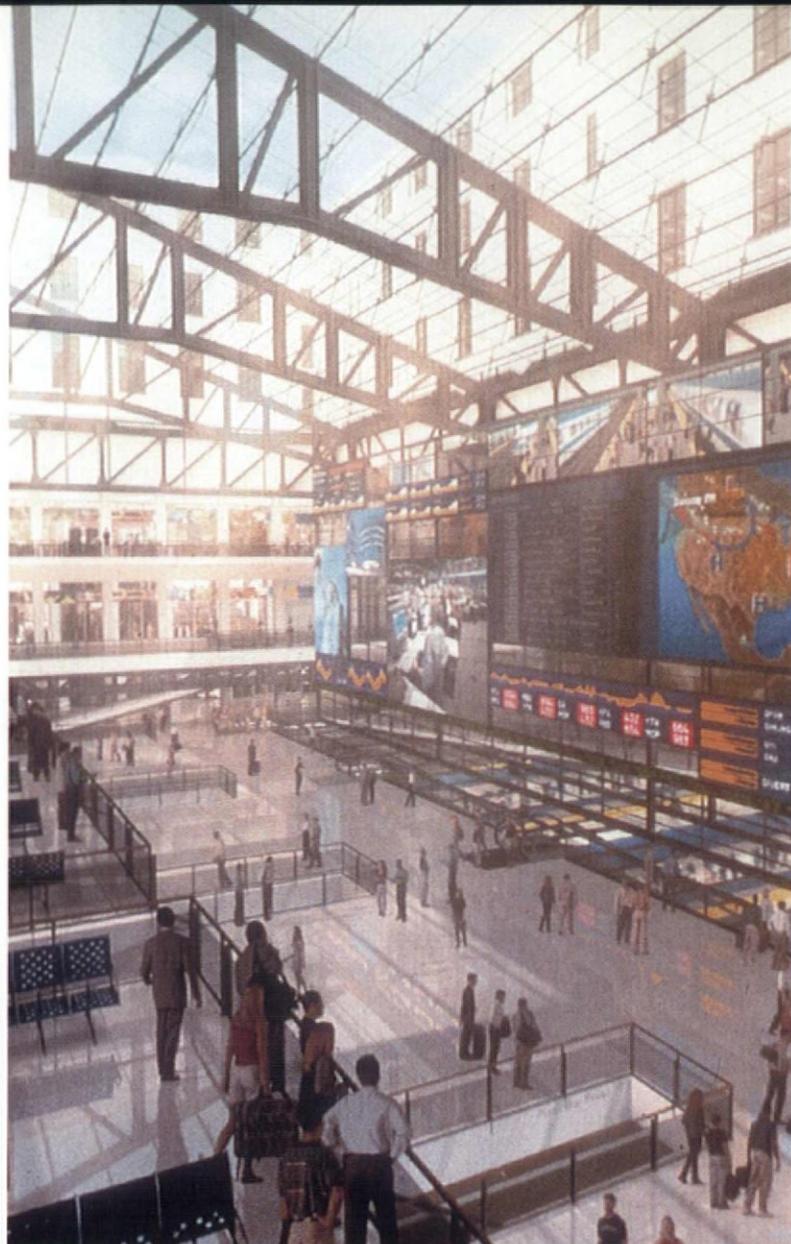
The renewal of New York's signature streets, parks and public spaces has given the city the courage to consider how a wide range of bypassed, abandoned, or never accessible places can be added to the public realm. Hardy has helped the city rediscover abandoned spaces, such as Bridgemarket, or re-imagine how space that have historically been off limits, such as the work areas of the James A. Farley Building/General Post Office, could be reconfigured for public use.

The Farley post office has been chosen as the site for relocating Amtrak's Pennsylvania Station—a project with incomparably high architectural stakes for the city. The demolition of McKim, Mead and White's classic terminal structure and the burial of the station beneath an office complex and arena was regarded as a civic disaster from the get-go, while the public is demanding that the $300 million the transformation of this building (also designed by McKim, Mead & White as a companion to the lost station) must be more than an act of architectural atonement.

The architectural design for the conversion of the Farley post office into a new version of Pennsylvania Station is being headed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, while HHPA is serving as a consultant on historic preservation, restoration and design. This is a collaboration of the highest civic order, occurring at the interstices of memory, tradition, myth and the desire of
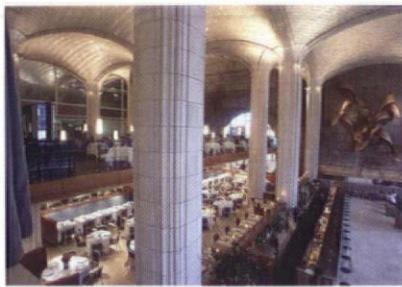
architecture to embody the spirit of the day. This conversation has been terribly polarized at its worst, and at its best remains stilted and uneasy. The Farley Building will likely win accolades as a visionary new transportation center, but its greater significance may lie in demonstrating the possibility of architectural collaboration in dynamic, yet historic, environments.

Bridgemarket, which included the creation of restaurant and shopping space under the Queensboro bridge, restated the public's claim to a long-lost market space. When the steel-frame bridge was built in 1909, the exterior of the Manhattan approach was covered with a granite and terra cotta veneer, the bridge's structural supports were sheathed in terra cotta, and the vaults were turned into a tile-colored canopy. For decades, the space flourished as a public market (part of the city's efforts to clear pushcart vendors off the streets) until a city agency commandeered it for garage space and workshops.

HHPA's involvement in the project spanned more than twenty years, working with various development teams and merchants, and the project was shaped by market demands, the community review process and landmark preservation oversight.

—Todd W. Bressi

Bridgemarket, created under and adjacent to a bridge connecting Manhattan to Queens, attracts people from different neighborhoods to its supermarket, restaurant and furniture store. The place is now a transition point between different communities, rather than a barrier.

Top left: Gustavino's restaurant. Photo © Georgia Glynn Smith.

Top right: Food Emporium supermarket. Photo courtesy Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.

Above: The Terence Conran Shop. Photo © Peter Aaron, ESTO.

Herald Square and Greeley Square Kiosks

Carefully designed, carefully placed pavilions help bring two small Midtown public spaces back to life.

Greeley Square kiosk
Photo © Chris Lovi

Herald Square restroom

The restoration of parks and public spaces in New York City has been a long and patient process, abetted by the emergence of private, non-profit groups skilled at marshalling necessary financial, organizational and political resources. Although this broadening of responsibility and initiative has raised questions about public accountability and equity, these projects have nevertheless revealed possibilities for the public realm that had essentially been foreclosed.

One of the earliest examples was the restoration of Bryant Park, Midtown's largest open space. By the 1980s the park had become dominated by drug dealing and fallen into a state of disrepair and disregard. Earlier studies of use patterns by public space advocates—most notably William H. Whyte—and environmental psychologists clearly documented its design deficiencies.

The park plan, a collaboration of the Hanna-Olin Partnership, HHPA and Lynden Miller, set a standard for restorative landscape design. HHPA designed kiosks that bracket two park entrances, providing a watchful eye and welcome, as well as a restaurant, which sits snugly against the New York Public Library's rear wall and turns what was once a dead edge into an important destination, activity generator and visual focal point.

The project involves a partnership that was groundbreaking at the time: reconstruction, maintenance and programming were taken on by the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, a local business improvement district. The construction

of the restaurant—a profit-making entity and therefore an anathema to watchdog park advocates—was possible because it occupies the back terrace of the library (a private institution), and thus does not sit on park land.

The structures know better than to steal the scene—which, of course, is all about the dramatic layers of space created by the skyscrapers that surround the park, the trees that embrace the lawn, and the landmark library that serves as a backdrop—as well as the fascinating, everchanging human activity on the lawn and under the allees.

Hardy is now involved in the renewal of Herald and Greeley Squares, two wedge-shaped spaces at the intersection of Broadway, Sixth Avenue and 34th Street. Here, the task of establishing functional public spaces was complicated by the extraordinary volumes of vehicular traffic that choke the squares.

HHPA designed four new kiosks that complement landscape and traffic-calming improvements implemented by another BID, the 34th Street Partnership. The structures impel people into the space; their chamfered corners offer intriguing sight lines and draw pedestrians in like planets tugging on satellites. They provide space for newsstands, coffee bars, even public restrooms, amenities that make lingering at the cafe tables in the gardens an all the more reasonable—and given the squares' location, remarkable—proposition.

—Todd W. Bressi

Bryant Park Kiosks, Cafe and Grill

An unprecedented public-private partnership and effective design collaboration revives Midtown Manhattan's greatest open space.
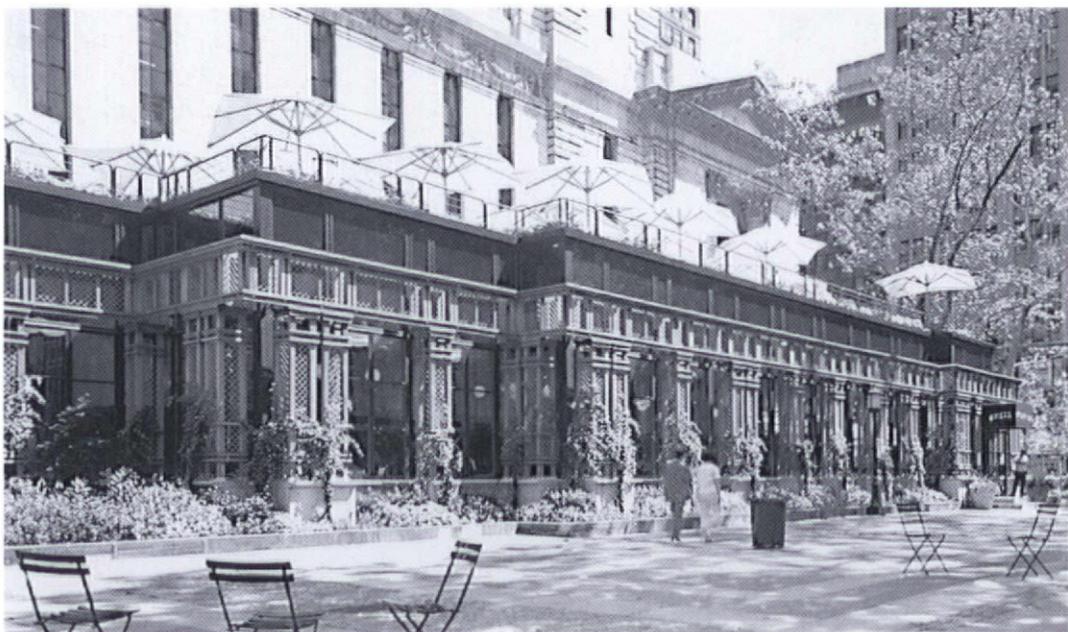
The Bryant Park Grill and cafe attract people into the back of the park, enlivening an area defined by the rear wall of the New York Public Library.

Top photo © Chris Lovi, bottom photo © Paul Warchol.

**The High Line,
110th Street Streetscape**

The power of collaborations and partnerships, successful in reviving New York City's signature public spaces, is now being used to advocate for places with less cachet or clout.
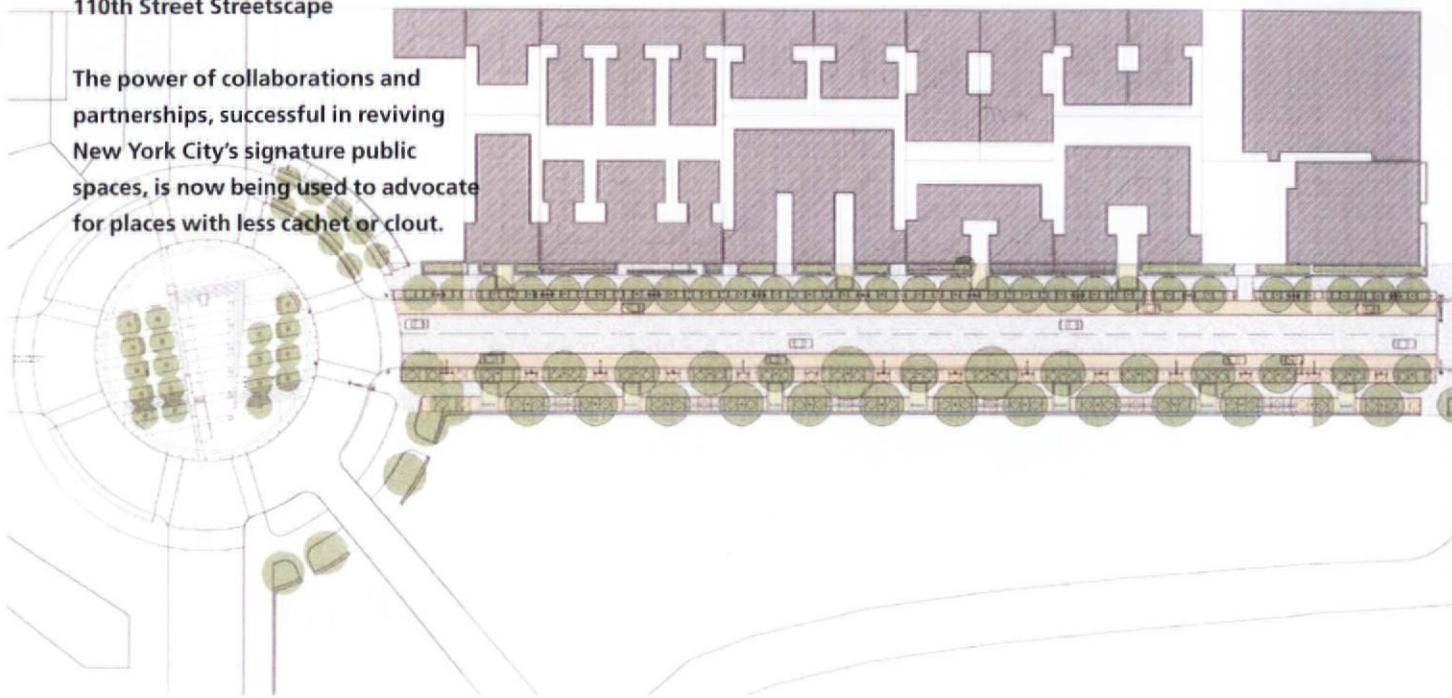
The 110th Street Streetscape project helps transfer the energy from the refurbished Central Park to the adjacent neighborhood. Graphic © Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates

Civic designers have helped frame broad visions for American cities, certainly since the days of Frederick Law Olmsted. Today civic designers not only require vision and foresight, as they did in Olmsted's time, but also the capability to work with fragmented power structures and diverse constituencies. The work of the civic designer requires not only a long view but also an articulate voice and a skilled hand.

Hardy has brought these qualities to the civic projects on which he has collaborated in New York. Long active in civic design advocacy organizations, he is currently a member of a group of designers and community leaders who seek to preserve The High Line, an abandoned, elevated railroad track in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. The High Line has long fascinated designers and parks advocates; there were first a spate of proposals for using it as a light rail corridor and now, more magnificently, perhaps, as an aerial park, an aerie, much in the spirit of the Promenade Plantée in Paris.

HHPA is also working with residents of Harlem and the non-profit Cityscape Institute to make the streetscape along Central Park's northernmost border every bit as elegant as those that front the park in tonier neighborhoods. The project, which involves improved street furniture, graphics and lighting and combines the talents of a lighting designer, landscape architect and a design architect, will reverse priorities and identify this boulevard as a place primarily for people, not cars.

In part, this project recognizes that Central Park's wondrous transformation cannot stop its boundaries. For Hardy, it is a statement that civic streets in Harlem deserve as much civic attention as parks and squares in Midtown. HHPA's earlier work in the neighborhood, administrative and artistic space for the Dance Theatre of Harlem, showed that New York's civic, urban and artistic spirit can be used to lift local neighborhoods as well as define the global city.

—*Todd W. Bressi*

New Amsterdam Theater
Client: Walt Disney Imagineering
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; Stewart Jones, project
manager; Maya Schali, project
architect; John Mueller,
construction architect; Kristina
Walker, interiors; Massoud
Ghassen; Carl Karas)
Theater Consultant:
Theater Projects
Acoustical Consultant: Jaffe
Holden Scarbrough Acoustics
Lighting Consultant:
Fisher Marantz Renfro Stone
Historic Preservation Consultant:
Building Conservation Associates

Theater Row, Theater Tower
Clients: The Shubert Organization
(Shubert/Sprecher Theater), The
Brodsky Organization (Theater
Tower), 42nd Street Development
Corporation (six small theaters)
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; Jack Martin, Marina
Berendeeva, Arturo Padilla,
Margaret Sullivan, Ely Valipay)
Theater Consultants: Fisher
Dachs Associates, Inc., Jeff Harris
Acoustical Consultants: Jaffe
Holden Scarbrough, Cerami
& Associates, Inc.
Lighting Consultant:
Robert Brannigan

New Victory Theatre
Client: The New 42nd Street, Inc.
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; Stewart Jones, project
manager; Raoul Lowenberg,
construction architect; Douglas
Stebbins, project architect;
Kristina Walker, interiors;
Massoud Ghassem, David West,
Daniel Barrenchia)
Acoustical Consultant: Jaffe
Holden Scarbrough Acoustics
Theater Consultant: Fisher Dachs
Associates, Inc.

Architectural Lighting: Fisher
Marantz Renfro Stone Inc.
Historic Preservation Consultant:
Building Conservation Associates

**Herald and Greeley Square
Park Kiosks**
Client: 34th Street Partnership
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; John Fontillas, project
manager; Yasin Abdullah,
construction administrator;
Jason Chang)

**Bryant Park Kiosks,
Cafe and Grill**
Client/Developer: Bryant Park
Restoration Corporation
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; Pam Loeffelman,
project manager; Robin Kunz,
interiors; David Rau)
Landscape Architect (Park):
Hanna/Olin Ltd.
Landscape Design: Lynden B.
Miller Public Garden Design
Lighting Consultant: Howard
Brandston Lighting Design, Inc.

Bridgemarket
Owner: City of New York
Department of Transportation
Owner's Agent: New York
City Economic Development
Corporation
Developer: Bridgemarket
Associates LP
Tenants: The Terence Conran
Shop (Conran Holdings),
Guastavino's Restaurant
(Guastavino's Inc.), Food
Emporium (The Great Atlantic
Pacific Tea Company)
Design architect (Bridgemarket)
and architect of record
(Guastavino's Restaurant and
The Terence Conran Shop): Hardy
Holzman Pfeiffer Associates
(Partner-in-Charge, Hugh Hardy;
Project Manager, Pam Loeffelman;
Project Architect, Steve Maisano;
John Mueller; Setrak Ohannessian;
Design Team, Juhee Lee Hartford,

Yasin Abdullah, Jason Chang,
Ching-Wen Lin; Interiors,
Caroline Bertrand)
Design architect (Guastavino's
Restaurant and The Terence
Conran Shop): Conran & Partners
(Director-in-Charge, Richard
Doone; Design Director, James
Soane; Project Designer, Tina Ellis;
Design Team: Hing Chan, Jane
Houghton, Cathy Train, Michael
Sandford, Steven Separovich)
Landscape Design: Lynden B. Miller
Public Garden Design

**Pennsylvania Station,
James A. Farley General
Post Office**
Clients: Pennsylvania Station
Redevelopment Corporation,
United States Postal Service,
National Railroad Passenger
Corporation
Architectural Design/Project
Management: Skidmore, Owings
& Merrill LLP (David Childs, partner,
design; Marilyn Taylor, partner,
project manager; Christopher J.
McCready, Ross Wimer, Kevin
Peters, associates)
Historic Preservation, Restoration,
Building Design consultants: Hardy
Holzman Pfeiffer Associates (Hugh
Hardy, partner-in-charge; Pam
Loeffelman, principal; David G.
Cornelius, project manager)
Architectural Design (USPS):
Ismael Leyva Architects
Acoustics: Shan Milsom &
Wilke Lighting: Susan Brading
Lighting Design
Conservation: Building
Conservation Associates
Graphics: Pentagram

The High Line
Friends of The High Line (Steering
Committee: Philip Aarons, Joshua
David, Olivia Douglas, Robert
Hammond, Lynden B. Miller, Mario
Palumbo, Richard Socarides)

**110th Street Streetscape,
Harlem Gateway Corridor**
Client: Cityscape Institute
Design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer
Associates (Hugh Hardy, partner-
in-charge; Jean Gath, project
manager; John Fontillas, project
planner; Yasin Abdullah; Ching-
Wen Lin; Steve Stainbrook;
Ryan Bussard)
Landscape Architect: J-P Design
Group; Ken Smith
Lighting Design: Cline Bettridge
Bernstein Lighting Design, Inc.
Environmental Graphics:
Whitehouse & Company
Signage Design: The Williams
Group, Inc.

A signature aspect of the
PlaceMark is that we fashion
a stainless steel medallion
which we give to each Place-
Mark recipient, who is asked
to place it in a location that
they have helped to create
and consider to be most
emblematic of their work.

Hardy has chosen to set his
PlaceMark in New York's
Bryant Park, which was hon-
ored with and EDRA/*Places*
Award for place design in
1998 and is again reported
on in this issue.

The Anatomy of Sprawl

Brenda Case Scheer

Imagine a physician who has never studied human anatomy. He knows the common medicines all the doctors use, the usual tests everyone orders. Like an actor on ER, he yells "CBC! Chem 7! Bag him!" but he does not know how to interpret the test results and cannot understand why the patient recovers or dies.

We know more about the complex systems of the universe than we do about the formal growth and change of our own cities. Planners and designers offer medicine: "New waterfront! Streetscape! Design guidelines! STAT!" but may have only an informal understanding of how these interventions actually operate.

Unlike human bodies, cities are greatly varied in their physical form. In order to study them comparatively, we have to establish a system of analysis that breaks the physical city down into fundamental elements that can be found in all cities, regardless of their location, history and culture. The study of the physical form of cities is called urban morphology.

This case study examines the anatomy of suburban growth patterns that occurred during the last fifty years. The hypothesis is that suburban growth develops in patterns that are strongly conditioned by the pre-urban fabric, such as farm roads and fields. These patterns can generate extremely scattered and disordered suburban environments, which are difficult to plan or change because they are structurally flawed.

The area selected for study is Hudson, Ohio, which is an independent city–township situated between Cleveland and Akron. Although Hudson has a historic village center that is almost 200 years old, recent growth there has far overshadowed that which occurred during the first 150 years of its existence.

Analysis of Form

What are the important physical components of the city? Urban planners generally treat the city as a functional object, classifying areas and corridors by use. The most common breakdown is land use, which categorizes areas by the activities that take place there. This is complemented by transportation analysis, which describes how people move between different areas.

These tools, while important, are not very informative about the physical character of a place. Areas marked "residential" on a land-use map could consist of bungalows, mansions or apartments. "Commercial" areas could include corner stores, malls or gas stations.

Although there is a relationship between the form of a building and the activities that occur there, the form of something cannot be presumed from its function. One need only consider the many instances in which houses are re-used for offices or restaurants to recognize that the house form is not married to the act of dwelling.

On the urban scale, it is sometimes useful to set aside the consideration of the function of buildings in order to discover more fundamental physical patterns. The physical nature of different residential neighborhoods may be quite distinct, because of differing street patterns, building types and scales. These differences may indicate that the neighborhoods were built at different times or that they house different economic groups.

The basic components analyzed by all urban morphologists are land subdivision (plots or lots), buildings and other structures, and streets. These are combined in various ways to form larger components such as blocks, districts or tissues, and regions.

Urban morphologists usually conceive of the basic spatial and physical systems of the city as a hierarchy defined by physical scale; that is, a building is smaller than a lot, which is smaller than a block, and so on.[1] Especially in the model developed by Caniggia and Maffei, there is the concept of a nested hierarchy: the larger parts are composed of aggregations of the smaller parts.[2] This model places an emphasis on the building type, especially the dwelling unit, as the defining element of urban form. Developed especially to explain traditional European cities, it presupposes a strong relationship between the basic building types and lots, blocks and streets.

In many recently built suburbs, though, the urban form usually depends much less on individual building types because the building-lot-street relationship is much weaker (particularly in commercial areas). Lots may be much larger than the standard types, giving substantial flexibility to the site plan (think of the standard "big-box" type, floating indefinitely in its parking lot). Lots are not necessarily arranged in geometrically defined blocks. Street and block patterns are not related to the building type.

A Spatiotemporal Model of Urban Form

To better understand the relationships among these basic urban components, I have turned to a model that ecological scientists use to study complex ecosystems. In this model, the various components are organized by the rate at which they change:

For example, individual tree leaves respond rapidly to momentary changes in light intensity, CO_2 concentration and the like. The growth of

the tree responds more slowly and integrates these short term changes. Change in the species composition of the forest occurs even more slowly, requiring decades or even centuries.[3]

As the city grows and changes, its physical components also grow and change at different rates. The site of the city—its landform and bodies of water—changes on a geologic time scale. Streets and public ways are very persistent; in cities like Florence and Cologne, two-thousand-year-old Roman street plans peek out from behind a curtain of accumulated medieval and Renaissance buildings. By contrast, most buildings last only 100 to 300 years, and during their lifetime are repeatedly added to or altered by their inhabitants and owners. Objects like street trees and road signs normally have a much shorter endurance.

Moreover, each physical component can be comprised of a bundle of characteristics that have different rates of change. When considering streets, for example, the paving may change frequently while the right-of-way (path) may persist for a very long time.

Two broad groups of spatial ordering components—paths and plots—can be thought of as the checkerboard upon which the physical elements of the city are composed and built. The path of the street is the most persistent of human spatial demarcations, and its ability to endure for millennia places it in a different temporal order from the physical structures of the city.

Researchers also recognize the plot as a key spatial element of the city.[4] The plot is the division of the land into discrete units of ownership or control. Although it is not a physical object, it is often marked by more ephemeral objects like fences or walls, just as the path is made obvious by its paving. On any given plot of land, buildings may be adapted or rebuilt over and over while the outlines of the plot endure.

These components—site, paths, plots,
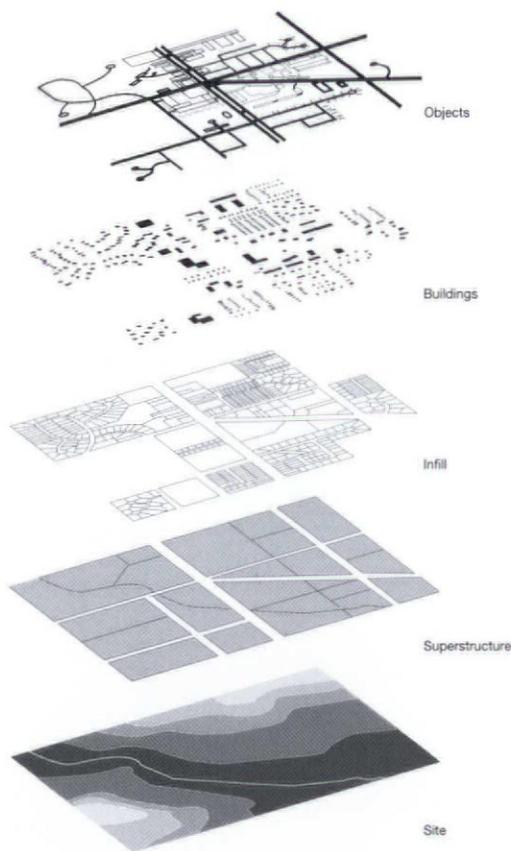
The spatio-temporal hierarchy introduces the element of time into urban morphological analysis.

buildings and objects—not only have different rates of change but also they appear at different moments in the construction of a city. It is useful to divide the paths and plots into two classes, the superstructure, which occurs on a large scale and pre-dates most urban development, and the infill, which represents the filling out of the urbanized growth, usually at a finer-grained scale.

These urban form components, shown as different layers of the same place, are shown in an accompanying illustration. The progression of the layers represents a hierarchy of expected rates of change from the most slow (site) to the most ephemeral (objects). These layers are:

Site. This includes landform, bodies of water and vegetation.

Superstructure. This includes paths and land boundaries that exist prior to urban settlement or are created to substantially restructure an urban settlement (such as urban renewal areas or new highways).

Infill. This includes finer-grained patterns of paths and plots that nestle within the superstructure, and are the basic framework for the construction of all built forms.

Buildings. This includes habitable structures including houses and institutional and commercial buildings; also the enduring and highly visible structures (such as bridges) that inhabit the space of the paths. These structures are built within the areas defined by the plots or paths of the infill and endure for decades or centuries.

Objects. This includes cultivated vegetation (hedges, trees and lawns), man-made objects (fences, towers, signs, monuments, wires), underground infrastructure and surfaces (parking lots, driveways, sidewalk and street paving). These objects are also constructed within the plots and paths of the infill but have a shorter endurance.

It is possible to interpret the layers of the city as a rich collage of interaction between the way the city was and the way it is today. The relatively

static layers represent, in a tangible, physical way, the city's history and an intense relationship with the land. More ephemeral layers reflect more immediate activities and ideas.

As in the ecological model, the more slowly a layer changes, the more it conditions changes in layers that change more quickly. For example, the relative permanence of the site, its resistance even to minor changes, makes it an enormous constraint on the location and distribution of paths while providing for a certain continuity in the urban pattern. The superstructure conditions the infill, the infill conditions buildings, and these in turn condition objects. Disturbances or discontinuities in older, more slowly changing layers can be very powerful. For example, dramatically widening an old road can affect every plot, building and object nearby.

Conversely, the faster-changing layers can only affect change in the slower layers through an aggregation of multiple changes that occur to many similar elements. The deterioration of a single building would not affect the layout of a block. However, the deterioration and destruction of multiple commercial buildings in an older downtown may eventually lead to the joining of small lots into larger ones.

The everyday changes of the city occur at the level of objects and buildings. Individuals alter objects every day: switching a sign or putting up a fence. Buildings, too, are relatively easy to change, perhaps by adding a room or filling in a porch. Buildings and objects are routinely destroyed and replaced, often replaced by quite different structures that are bigger, or a different type altogether. During the same time period, however, the spatial matrix of the paths and plots, especially the superstructure, usually remains constant. This layer is resistant to change because it requires tremendous social, economic and political power to change it—and when change occurs, it often signals an important historic event.

Hudson's Urban Morphology

Using this model, the following analysis describes Hudson's site, superstructure, infill patterns and buildings.

Hudson Township was originally part of the Western Reserve of Connecticut. The Western Reserve was divided into townships that are five miles square, or 25 square miles. The owners of Hudson Township surveyed the Township into 100 equal squares measuring 1/2 mile by 1/2 mile. These are called quarter-sections, because four of them make up a square mile (a section). This survey took place in 1799 and within one or two years settlers began to arrive.[5]

The original plan for the township called for a crossroads *cardo* and *decumanus*, typical in the Western Reserve. But the topography and presence of water was not considered when the township was originally divided; as it turned out, the western third of the township was (and is) covered in swamp, and the plan was not completed. Nevertheless, the earliest roads were in place by 1839, only 20 years after the surveying of the township, and the superstructure was essentially complete by 1901.

In 1950, Hudson was a small village on the verge of rapid expansion. One factor set it apart from its neighbors: an intense awareness of its history and its New England village qualities. At the turn of the century, in an attempt to rescue their little town from stagnation, citizens became obsessed with preservation, at a time when the U.S. preservation movement was in its infancy.

Outside the village boundaries, in the rural parts of the township, preservation was not an issue. Beginning in the 1950s, the township grew in response to the rapid growth of the adjacent urban areas, which were reached easily by the new interstate highway system. Since then, substantial amounts of farmland have been converted to housing subdivisions, and there is now very little undeveloped land.
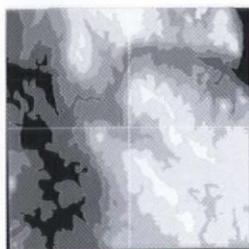
A. site topography
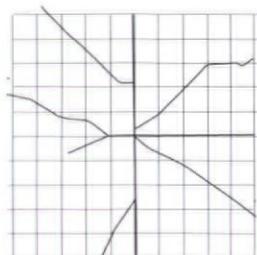
B. 1839 rural roads and 1799 land survey
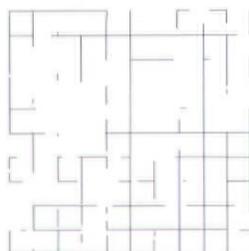
C. surviving portions of land survey, 1995
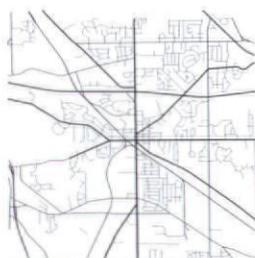
D. 1953 street superstructure (dark) with infill streets as of 1995

Although the township's population and land coverage began to grow tremendously, the underlying superstructure did not change. Except for the interstate highway (which has no exit within Hudson), the primary road network did not change at all from 1953 to 1995, and the roads that existed in 1839 have evolved into major roads today. Numerous internal subdivision streets have been added to the street network, but none of them provide connections outside the borders of the subdivisions they serve.

Infill subdivisions seem arbitrarily shaped and capriciously related to the street network. But their boundaries trace the spatial structure described by the original grid lines, pre-urban streets and pre-urban ownership patterns, mostly former wheat fields. In fact, about half of the quarter-section boundaries that existed in 1799 are preserved as paths or as lot lines.

The conclusion is unmistakable: the overall suburban form is directly conditioned by the size and shape of the pre-urban superstructure. No amount of subsequent planning or zoning has had close to the impact on patterns of suburban development that the original land survey and the division of the land into farms and fields have had.

Three Suburban Tissues

Even so, the infill areas in Hudson have not all developed in the same manner, either in regard to street-lot-building relationships or to their ability to adapt over time. Indeed, it is possible to find within Hudson's suburban infill development at least three distinct patterns of block, lot and building aggregations, or what I call urban tissue, which differ in terms of their form and relative endurance.

The vast majority of the area has been developed as what I call "static" tissues, or planned subdivisions, in which lots and streets were developed and sold for the construction of single-family homes. A second pattern has been "campus
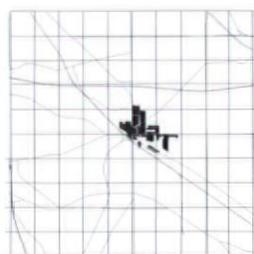
1953
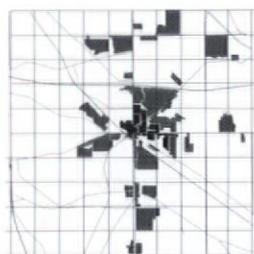
1970
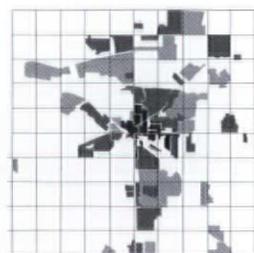
1984
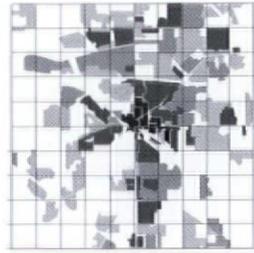
1995

tissues," or tracts of land that are developed with several buildings but not subdivided into distinct properties. Finally, in some places, especially along the pre-urban paths, land development proceeded as "elastic tissues," or a thickening of the existing settlement pattern, evolving from rural to urban almost imperceptibly as farmhouses were joined by other roadside structures.

Static tissues. The most extensive development in Hudson has been in the form of planned subdivisions. These have very distinct path-lot-building type patterns whose correspondence parallels that of tissues in traditional cities. The term "static" refers to the relative stability of these tissues, which have the following characteristics:

• The lots and paths are planned together, surveyed at about the same time, and are originally built out within a short period (ten to twenty years).

• The subdivided lots are small compared to the pre-urban lots they occupy and are roughly consistent in size throughout each area of tissue.

• Each lot usually contains a primary structure, of a type that the tissue itself was specifically designed to accommodate or that has evolved from the original type without requiring either an aggregation or further subdivision of the lots.

Over the course of Hudson's development, static tissues have come in several forms, consistent with the modern subdivision types identified by Michael Southworth and Peter Owens.[6] They evolved from the original small-scale blocks of the Village to the newer, curvilinear subdivisions of the outer town. The most recent of these static tissues cannot be subdivided easily into blocks or other smaller physical units.

Since 1970, for the most part, variations in the arrangement of paths and lots in static tissues have been a matter of style, not a consequence of changes in the typology of the houses intended to occupy the lots (although the most recent houses are larger). This trend reflects a growing self-absorption on the part of house owners, who want

pre-1953

1970

1984

1995
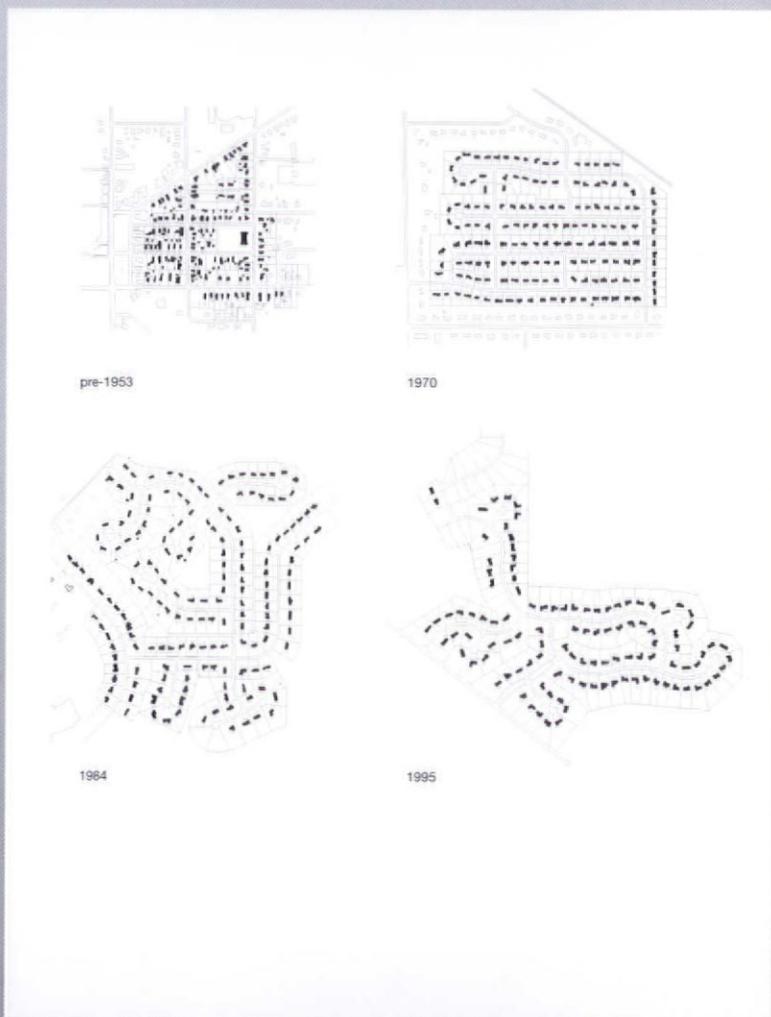
Examples of static tissues in Hudson

to project an image of individuality, which is pro-
vided by the larger lots and curved streets that
bring each home into separate focus as one travels
through the area. In earlier tissues, by contrast,
several houses are visible at the same time, creat-
ing a clear sense of the common public space of
the street.

The "static" label reflects a presumption about
the expected long-term endurance of tissues with
the above characteristics. The relatively small size
of the lots indicates a divided form of ownership
and management that resists wholesale change
through lot aggregations; these forms also tend to
be protected through codes that prevent further
subdivision. The rapid build-out of these tissues
also tends to favor a consistent application of
building types, which in turn tends to stabilize an
area: redevelopment that is inconsistent with the
existing fabric is discouraged because it can have a
chilling effect on the value of nearby properties.

Over a long period of time, of course, this sta-
bility can be eroded by the many incremental
changes that occur in the buildings or objects.
Rooms are added, porches are removed, houses
are re-sided, garages are replaced by rec rooms,
lawns are paved; eventually, enough small
changes accumulate so that the neighborhood's
consistency is eroded and it is vulnerable to
larger changes.

Elastic tissues. The least stable of the three types
of infill is the elastic tissue. In Hudson, elastic tis-
sues developed as a thickening of the rural devel-
opment patterns, mostly along the pre-urban
paths. Their characteristics include the following:
• *The tissue is not pre-planned; it evolves over time
and has a rapid change rate compared to static tissues.*
• *Lots tend to be highly varied in size, though they are
generally larger than lots in static tissues, and gener-
ally contain a single major structure.*
• *Elastic tissues tend to produce very few paths, relying
on pre-urban paths for access. Paths within the tissue
are built individually rather than as logical networks.*

Areas of elastic tissue are primarily composed
of retail, commercial and industrial uses, such as
strip shopping centers, fast food emporiums and
gas stations (although residential buildings are
sometimes mixed in).

Elastic tissues form the breathing spaces of a
rapidly developing suburb. They lack the congru-
ence of building types, lots and streets that char-
acterize traditional cities or static tissues. Change
in these areas occurs at a faster rate than else-
where in the city, and is characterized by rapid
turnover in businesses; obsolescence, major
remodeling and destruction of buildings; and the
aggregation and subdivision of land to create new
development opportunities. The tremendous
pressure to develop and redevelop these areas is
not inhibited by consistent fabric or small-scale
ownership patterns, as it is in static areas; in effect,
the elastic tissues are the only place that signifi-
cant change can happen in a short period of time.

Campus tissues. Significant areas of the devel-
oped suburb are composed of larger tracts of land
owned by single entities and developed with mul-
tiple buildings. The characteristics of campus tis-
sues are:
• *The pre-urban lot is not subdivided and contains
more than one significant structure.*
• *Internal paths are organized as private streets; as
such, they do not form boundaries between lots.*

Examples of campus tissues are universities,
shopping complexes, airports, apartment com-
plexes, medical centers, corporate campuses,
industrial complexes, civic centers, recreation
areas and government centers.

It is difficult to generalize about the change
characteristics of campus tissues. Most of the
time, internal changes take place relative to
changing functional requirements, without the
usual inhibitions of lot boundaries or surrounding
paths or structures. In this regard, campuses are
quite flexible. There is also a marked tendency for
campuses to expand into other tissues nearby, or

(less commonly) to contract if the current use no longer warrants the land area. More recently, campus tissues have been carved from left over space between subdivisions, or established without reference to the surrounding development.

Suburban Tissues and the Spatio-temporal Model

The spatio-temporal model suggests that the longer the natural lifespan of a system, the more influence it has on the slower layers in the hierarchy. Using this model to understand the suburban form of Hudson, we see that the most enduring layers—the site and superstructure—limit the location and expansion of the infill, while the infill may have little or no effect on the superstructure.

The static tissues and campus tissues respond neatly to this model, fitting comfortably within the superstructure. In static tissues, the lots and paths form a semi-rigid matrix within which certain changes can easily take place and others are constrained; breaking the bounds of this matrix is difficult and unusual. Campus tissues are likewise structured by paths and plots, but in a less rigid manner that allows a far greater range of changes to occur.

Elastic tissues, on the other hand, cling tightly to the superstructure. They do not generate a structure of infill streets; thus, there is no semi-rigid matrix that limits further change. In most instances, building types are not particularly conditioned by the lots, since the lots are not planned to accommodate a specific building type. Instead, lots have been aggregated from smaller lots and any particular building may be planned to maximize the use of a randomly sized lot. Another common change is to subdivide a large lot along its road frontage, leaving a larger parcel in the back with road access, and smaller lots in the front. All this leads to a tissue where the buildings are extremely varied in size, type and orientation.



A. roadside strip

B. village center

A. school complex

B. apartment compex

Examples of elastic tissues in Hudson

Examples of campus tissues in Hudson

campus tissues
static tissues

elastic tissues

Distribution of static, elastic and campus tissues

Urban Planning and the Spatiotemporal Model

Much planning for suburban areas is done with little understanding of the spatio-temporal processes that form these places. The model of physical growth presented here suggests that different planning and design interventions are appropriate for different layers of urban form and different kinds of development tissue.

In planning for undeveloped territory, for example, it would be wise to examine the physical arrangement of existing property boundaries and rural roads, as these are likely to be the checkerboard on which the real estate game is played. Once development begins, the road structure is more or less fixed, whether it is adequate or not. Intervention at the earliest stages of development of an American suburban region could most productively take the form of rethinking rural networks for new suburban growth.

This is especially important in the locations where elastic tissues are expected to grow, which are generally predictable. Areas of elastic tissue areas could become denser, more limited in their extent, easier to control and more attractive if an orderly pattern of streets and lots were established in advance, much as it is for housing subdivisions. The tissue pattern itself would help condition the form of the development, while a larger number of streets would improve access and relieve traffic congestion, thereby encouraging business activity.

Planning for the evolution of already developed suburban areas is extremely difficult because they are highly constrained by the superstructure and, in some cases, the infill layers. Widespread densificiation of sprawling static tissues is unlikely; if anything, planning tools are configured to promote stability, not change, in these places. Rapidly changing elastic tissue areas are structurally disordered at the level of lots and paths, and deeply conditioned by their relationship to the superstructure, but most cities focus on building design, signage and landscape
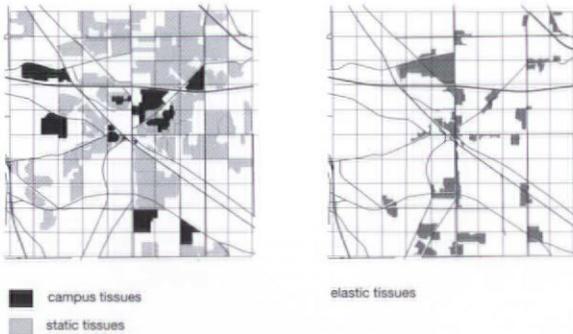
controls rather than addressing these more funda-
mental structural issues. Campus tissues, which
can evolve into large, inacessible islands, are
largely left unregulated.

The regulatory techniques that suburbs com-
monly rely upon are either insufficient for con-
trolling suburban form or poorly used. Most
significantly, no regulations or local agency con-
trol the formation, continuity or distribution of
the superstructure. The sprawling infill layer,
conditioned by low-density zoning and subdivi-
sion codes, is largely designed by private land
developers, who pay little regard to any relation-
ships outside their subdivision boundaries.

Suburban form is most strongly related to pat-
terns and shapes that do not normally come to the
attention of planners. Modern regulatory
processes do not address some of the most influ-
ential and long-lasting layers of the city, tending
instead to intervene in transitory conditions such
as specific land use, building details, and built
landscape. Such transitory conditions should
be lightly regulated to provide more leeway
for growth and change, while the urban frame-
work should be more controlled than current
practice allows.

Notes

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Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).
2. Gianfranco Cannigia and Gian Luigi Maffei, *Architectural
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3. R. V. O'Neill, D. L. Angelis, J. B. Waide and T. F. H. Allen,
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University Press, 1986), 76.
4. Many researchers have commented on this, but the origi-
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Eichlers

Daniel Solomon

In 1943 my father was an Army doctor at a base outside Sacramento. My parents made friends with three other Jewish families whose breadwinners were a furrier, a dentist and an architect. The three families got together all the time to cook and eat, play bridge and tell funny stories.

The furrier lived in a bungalow with a porch and a great sloping front lawn. The dentist lived in paradise, a pink house on a corner in old Sacramento with big screen porches, a swimming pool and a rose arbor.

The architect had a beautiful daughter named Missy who was six months younger than I. Shortly after the war, they moved to one of the first Eichler houses outside Sacramento. I will always remember the architect's pride as he conducted the first tour of his dream house for the other three families. For reasons I did not understand as a little kid this speech entered the comedic lore of the other families and all of the adults could do a version of it to the vast amusement of the others for years afterwards. I began to see what was funny years later when Missy and I found the open plan of the architect's utopia an uncongenial setting in which to share the first gleams of hormonal dawn. The indelible stolen moments of early adolescence took place in the furrier's cozy nooks and the dentist's magic rose arbor.

By many measures, Eichler's houses are one of the success stories of the post-war years, and they are cult objects today, like vintage race cars. During the war years there was very little work for architects and some, like John Entenza, the sponsor and editor of *Arts and Architecture*, made work for many of the leading architects of the day by imagining what post-war life might be like.

Entenza and his distinguished stable of underemployed architects created the Case Study House program, a fantasy during the war and a reality of limited scope afterwards. The Case Study program was the precursor to Eichler, who studied its results, appropriated what he liked and discarded what didn't work for him. Eichler also studied the works of William Levitt whose Levittown, Long Island, was the model of rationalized mass production of housing for the G.I. Bill.

Eichler's formula was comprised of equal parts of Entenza's Case Studies and Levittown, but the synthesis of the two was something quite different from either. Like Levitt, Eichler had no illusions about changing the techniques or materials of home building. He saw correctly that the exquisite steel fabrication of the Case Study houses was a romanticized view of war technology that could never be adapted to housing on a large scale. Like Entenza, he believed that there was a moral basis to the aesthetics of modern architecture that masses of people could understand, respect and learn to love. (Eichler himself lived in a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian House and he saw himself as a missionary bringing the grace of modern architecture to a mass market.) Thus Eichler's houses look like modest versions of the Case Study Houses, but they were made of timber, plywood, light wood framing and particle board, not unlike the houses of Levittown.

Eichler was an aesthetic missionary, but the times were larger than he was. His noble accomplishment was part of something that was far from noble—the post-war policies that built our sprawling, isolating suburbs and wrought ruthless damage on our cities and city-regions. Eichler houses promised a lot, but they also delivered something their creators never thought about, something more terrifying and more enduring than all they set out to do.

Curiously, the bungalows promoted by *American Craftsman* and *Bungalow Magazine* thirty years

before promised exactly the same things and delivered none of them. The kitchens were dark and segregated, rooms didn't open to gardens and the tectonic morality of the Arts and Crafts ideal was only there on the front porch. The rest was framing, cladding and a symbolic language of trim, not unlike Mies van der Rohe's symbolic language of trim masquerading as structure in a different American building context. Yet the bungalows also delivered something their purveyors were apparently totally indifferent to, at least they never wrote a word about the subject. They delivered beautiful streets, common courtyards, neighborhoods, communities—the American town at its noblest, most democratic and most civil. It is why bungalow neighborhoods are so popular today.

Eichler's streets are the opposite. Period piece publicity photographs depict an entirely private world in which no two buildings reside next to one another, in which there is never a relationship to something older or different. It is a world in which the vanity fair of the street has given way to the carport, to endless rows of them, which in the real world most often have the totemic autos of the staged photographs displaced by the detritus of daily life.

The grand things that Eichler accomplished did not survive Eichler, the man. Without him as the force and the conscience, the art of the Eichler house quickly vanished. What did not vanish quickly, what was left for a later generation to struggle with, was the vanquishing of the street—the hegemony of the private over the public. Frank Lloyd Wright and the Case Study architects imagined private utopias in which townscape would magically melt away; Eichler realized their dreams on a huge scale. It is for our generation and our successors to learn to build the American town all over again from scratch—like stroke patients learning painfully in their old age to walk and talk.

San Mateo Highlands
(Calif.) development, 1956

Eichler photos by
Ernie Braun, courtesy
Eichler Network Archives

Unknown location

One of the first Eichler atrium
models, Ashen & Allen design.
San Mateo Highlands (Calif.)
development, 1958

Dusk in the rear patio.
Terra Linda development,
San Rafael, Calif., 1960

Back patio barbeque
Unknown location

Fairbrae development,
Sunnyvale, Calif., 1960
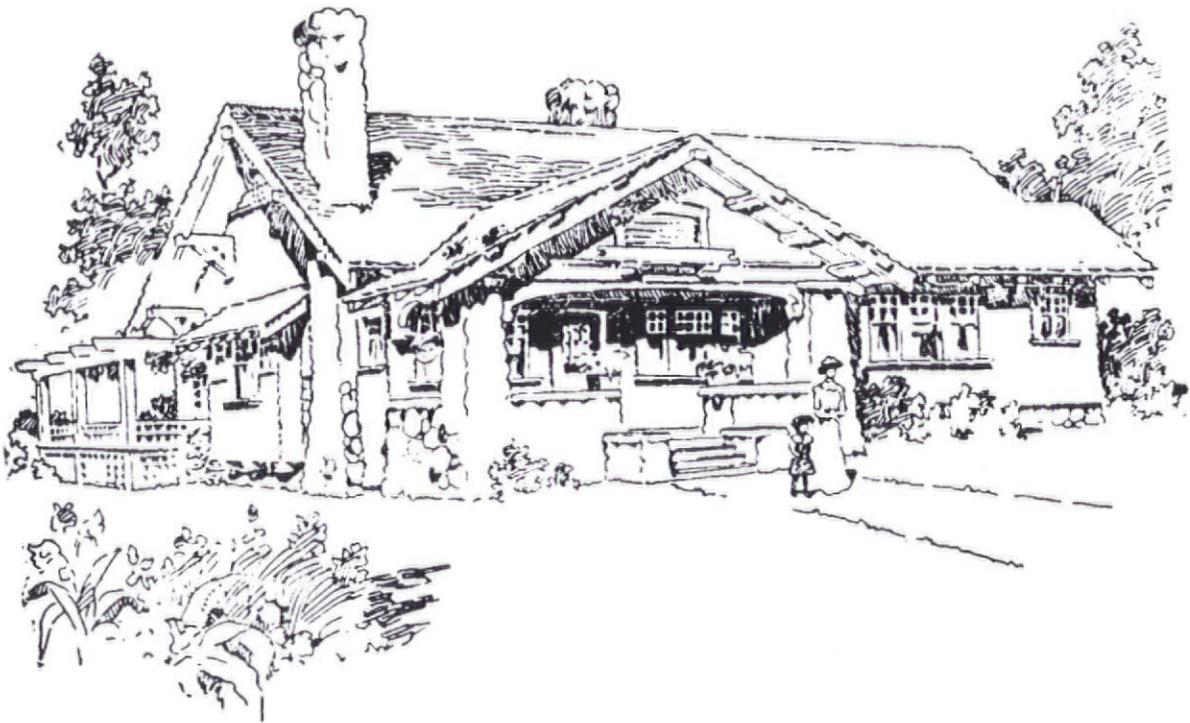
From William Phillips,
*Bungalows, Camps and
Mountain Houses*
Courtesy AIA Press
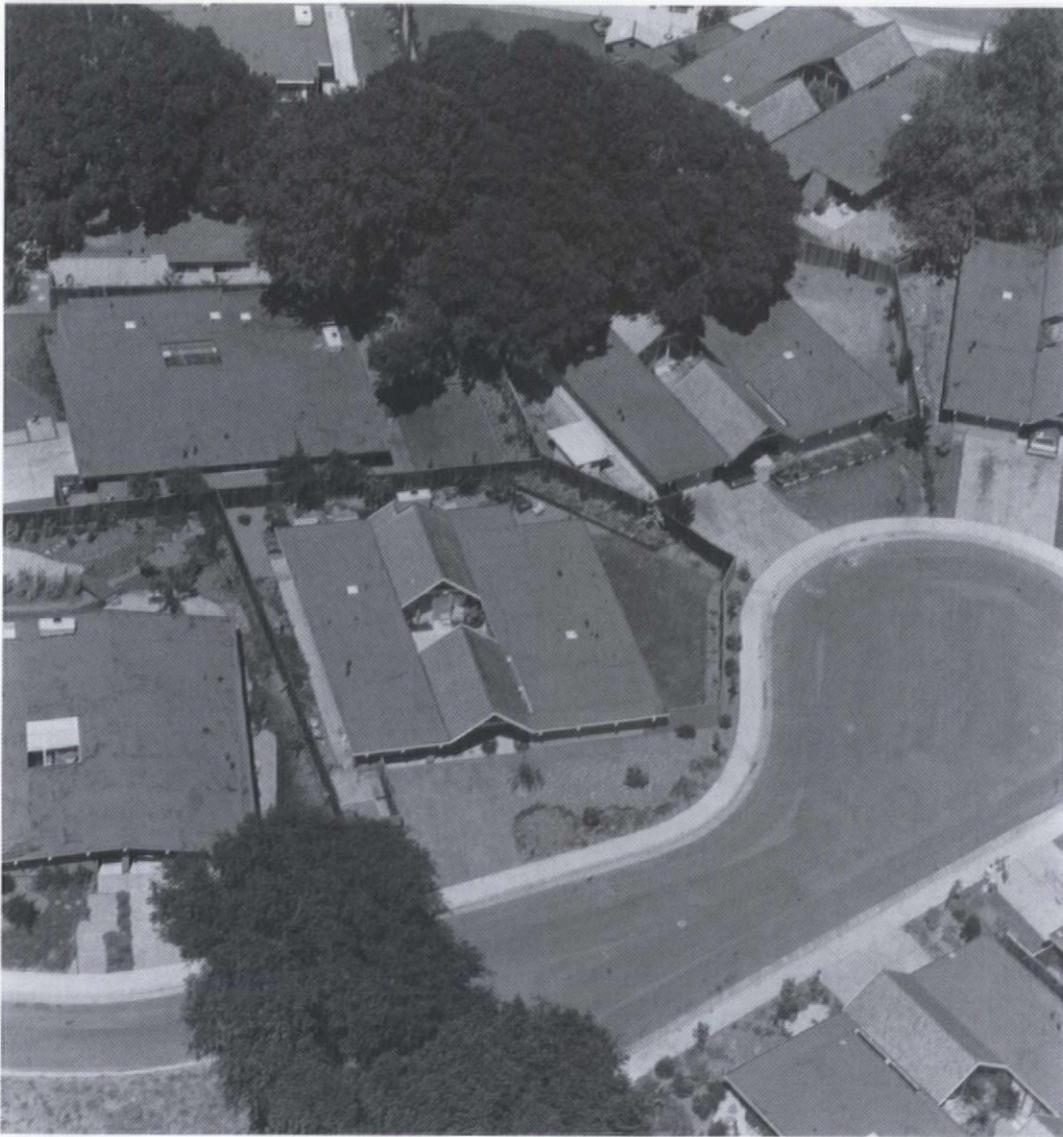
Lucas Valley, Calif.,
development, 1956
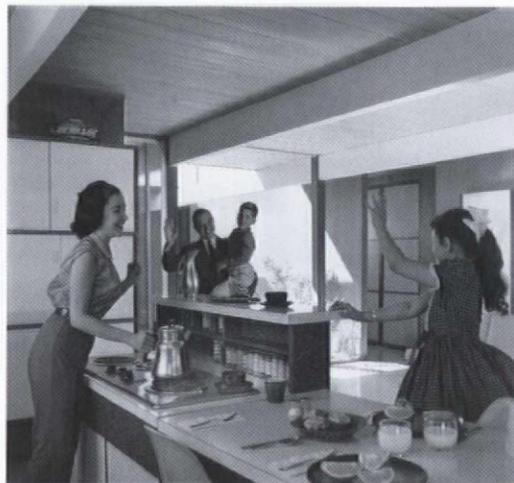
Fairbrae development,
Sunnyvale, Calif., 1960
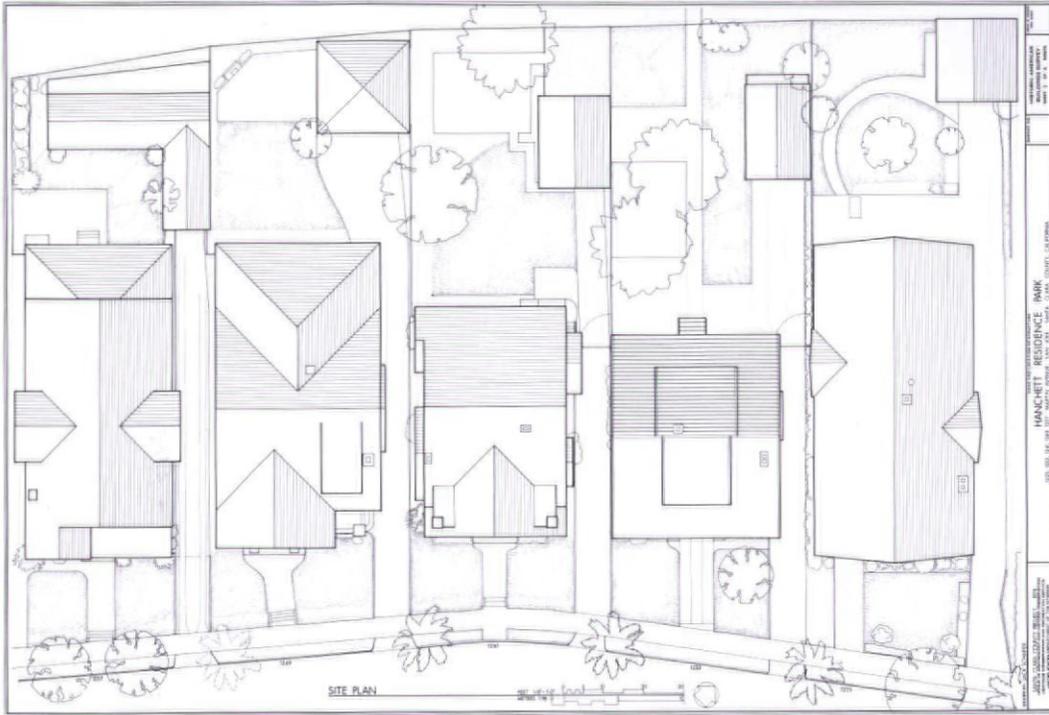
Above: Hanchett Residence
Park, San Jose, Calif., 1978
Graphic by Historic American
Building Survey, U.S. Depart-
ment of the Interior, courtesy
Beth Wyman

Left: Bungalow community
in Bend, Ore.
Courtesy Michael Houser

Performance Standards

Gwendolyn Wright

The early photographs of Eichler homes announce a distinctively American hybrid functionalism, one that fused the manifest visibility of structure and economy with subliminal human needs for comfort, familiarity, and joy. This combination of new technologies with more traditional concerns epitomized middle-class suburban life in California in the 1950s and '60s. The longing for a union between the two remains resonant today.

These were marketing photographs, of course, and Ernest Braun's work captured Joseph Eichler's keen awareness of the needs and opportunities of his time and milieu. Many pictures depict actors performing the roles of happy family and friends in surroundings that are at once generic and distinctive settings for these dramas. Togetherness radiates as they laugh and embrace one another; at the same time, a teenager, strangely unmindful of her parents and their friends watching from the patio, asserts her autonomy on the telephone. If today we cannot fail to sense the strained upbeat emotions, especially on the faces of women and adolescents, and the consumerism that defines well-being, we also recognize a compelling simplicity and directness.

Like the houses themselves, Braun's images never look back nostalgically to an idealized past. They tout the benefits of new materials and production techniques developed during World War II, then maintained by the military–industrial–university complex that flourished in northern California during the decades that followed. Inexpensive wartime materiél—plywood, foam insulation, high-gloss durable plastic paints and laminates, clear acrylic skylights—were deployed in these homes. The simple framing and roof supports were left exposed; modular wall elements interspersed floor-to-ceiling panels in wood, glass or sliding glass doors; space and activities flowed easily between the bright, simple interiors and their lush natural surroundings.

The architectural quality is evident, without ever suggesting that it serves to ratchet up the occupants' taste. For his first houses of 1949, Eichler turned to Robert Anshen of Anshen & Allen, who designed a few basic prototypes that could be varied along a block. Popular magazines, such as *Life* and *House Beautiful*, as well as professional magazines, notably *Architectural Forum*, carried Braun's photos of their products to a larger national audience. The San Francisco Museum of Art placed some of these photographs alongside the major 1949 exhibition, "Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area," with its more formal portraits (including two by Braun) of custom-designed houses in a similar vein by Anshen & Allen, Hamilton Harris, Gardner Dailey, Joseph Esherick and other architects. A decade later Eichler brought in Quincy Jones for his southern California houses and Claude Oakland for new developments in the north.

These houses, as well as their systems of production and marketing, are resolutely modern— in the sense of the term as we use it now, and as it was understood in the 1950s. Whereas European modernism of the 1920s and '30s had alternated between the free flow of space in elegant private villas and well-designed if spartan Existenzminimum housing for urban workers, the American

movement turned its attention toward suburban single-family houses for a mass market. Braun's images embody that democratic vision of "the good life" available to everyone. (Indeed, while all the actors are white, Eichler insisted on racial integration in all his developments.) They also reveal a contemporary concept of collaboration: between architect and builder, building and setting (both natural and social), director and actors. We recognize an ongoing process of social and spatial change, rather than a static representation of modernity.

Experimentation thus takes many forms. The builder and the architects explored ingenious ways to improve the quality of domestic architecture while making good houses more affordable. The marketing sought to promote their endeavors and to foster like-minded efforts elsewhere. All the same, we are reminded, it is ultimately the residents themselves who create new possibilities, bringing their own ambitions and adaptations to the construction of joyful everyday lives.

Fairbrae development, Sunnyvale, Calif., 1960

Problems With Mistaking Community Life for Public Life

Michael Brill

Some time ago I was asked to review Peter Calthorpe's excellent book, *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community and the American Dream*, in preparation for a public mano-á-mano (a very gracious one) about the role of Public life in the New Urbanism.

I recalled the movie *The Truman Show*, set in an inspired locale, the mythical "Seahaven Island," actually the real Seaside, New Urbanism's touchstone beautiful community. The movie is the candy-coated nightmare of Truman Burbank, whose whole, dreary, perfect private life has been—unknown to him—broadcast as a twenty-four-hour-a-day, every day, television soap opera. In this compelling parable about what is really real, the entire population of Seahaven are extras in his life-show and Seahaven–Seaside is an elaborate stage set inside a giant dome. As well as showing his public "private" life, the film shows his dreary, perfect public "public" life, strongly structured by Seaside's design, all exemplifying the strange transformation of Public life in America, and most probably in the New Urbanism. Of course, it isn't Public life at all, but something else. Valuable, but "else."

Calthorpe correctly critiqued our "deadly and fragmented-life suburbs,"[1] discussed strategies for creating walkable and livable communities, and showed completed and on-the-boards projects embodying these strategies. My response to this fine body of work focused on the Public life and public places in Calthorpe's work and thinking, since they play such a central role in presentations about New Urbanism. Basically, I argued that:

• *Many people see social relationships as either Private or Public. They don't distinguish an important third form, Community life.*

• *Most people, like Calthorpe, don't differentiate between Public life and Community life, which are fundamentally different. Public life is sociability with a diversity of strangers; Community life is sociability with people you know somewhat.*

• *With our long-term and increasing emphasis on the private realm, we are losing both of these forms of broader social relationships, and many mourn that loss.*

• *In Calthorpe's book, there seems to be more concern for revitalizing Community life than for reviving Public life, although it is often referred to as public life or public uses.*

Calthorpe's design guidelines speak of traditional public places—plazas, parks and civic buildings, place-forms that are associated with an older European ecology of high local density and social diversity, and which facilitated interactions with strangers. But this form of Public life is not really desired in Seaside, Truman's "Seahaven Island" or New Urbanism. (And, given the population density of the "new urbs," it may not even be possible.) What is really sought seems to be Community life, like that in *The Truman Show*, but certainly better.

There is, therefore, a misfit between the place forms offered and the social behavior desired. There is also a high degree of design determinism
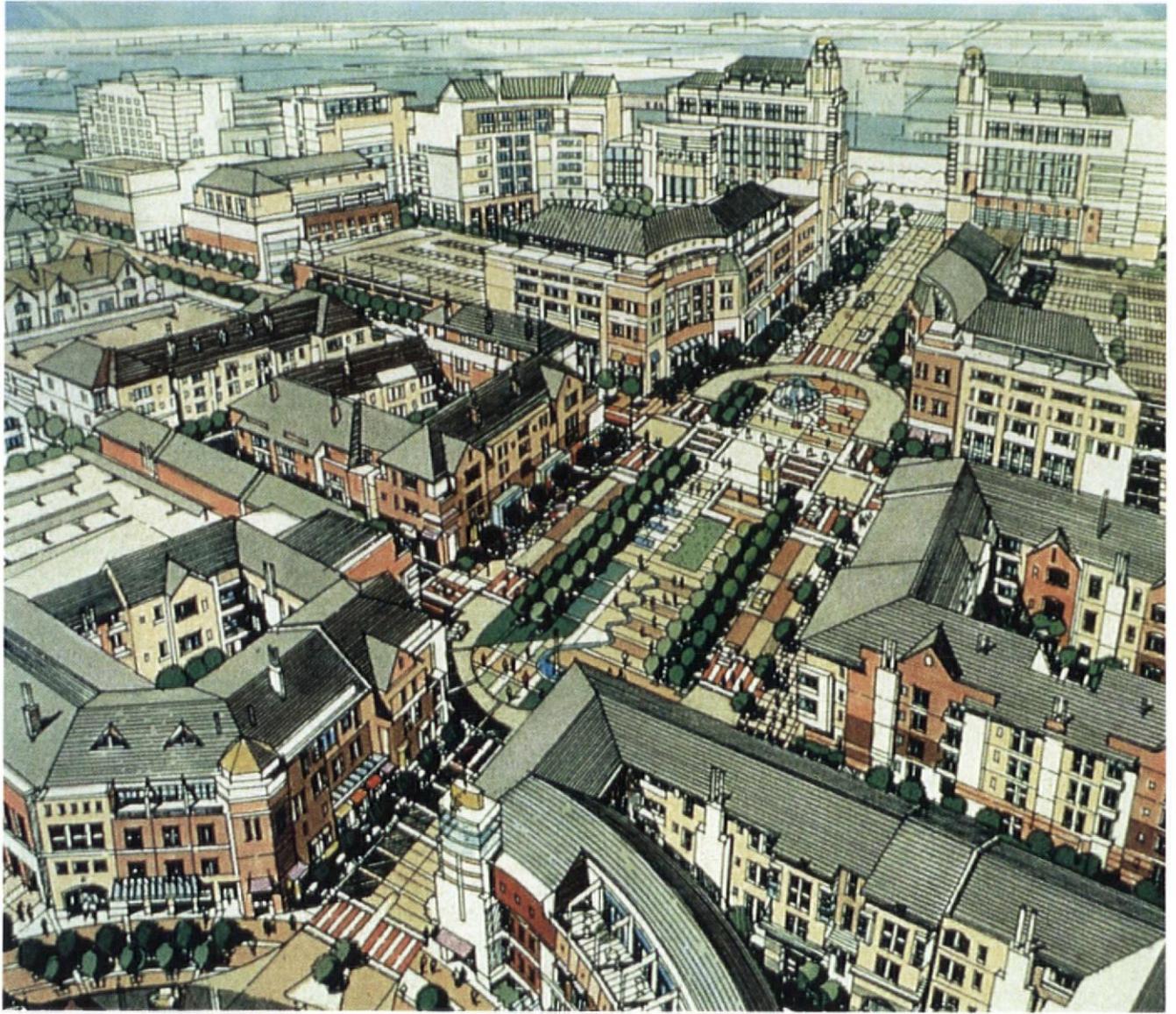
A vision for a New Urbanist town center: public square or community space?

here, suggesting that building the classical forms of Public life (or Community life) will actually generate it.

As Calthorpe and others observe, there has been some real loss of Public life, especially that which occurs in the presence of a diversity of strangers, and important graces, tolerances and social learnings are becoming lost to us. Nevertheless, there is still more Public life than social critics and designers believe. It occurs less and less in the classical venues of the street, square and park, but flourishes in alternative, less formally designed venues, many of them virtual and electronic.

Community life was already being revitalized, for people in certain social strata, by forces that precede and are independent of New Urbanism. But this revitalization often occurs in ways that diminish the possibilities for social relationships of tolerance, diversity and richness for urbanite, suburbanite and villager alike.

Thus, an important planning and design research agenda involves rethinking both places for Public life and for Community life, by

recognizing their differences, so that we can improve both the design of, and life in, New Urbanist communities. We need an expanded vocabulary of places for us to support the variety of social relationships we have, and need.

The Search for Community Life

Many people tend to think that there are two types of social relationships, Private life and Public life. However, our spatially defined social relationships have three basic forms:

Private life, with family and close friends, those we know most well and intimately, the portion of social relations least open to scrutiny because its locations are few and often privately held, like the home.

Public life, spent in the occasional company of a diversity of strangers of whom we know little more than what we see, not all of them projecting personas comfortable to engage, in locations all may use, many of them publicly held for the common good, like the square, park and street, and many privately held for common pleasure and commerce, like the night club and the Mall.

Community life (or parochial life, as it is called in the literature), spent with and among neighbors, nodding acquaintances, shopkeepers, locally resident police, fire, mail and town officials, and people in local fraternal, sporting and religious groups. Its varied locales are ones you know and frequent, a mix of both semi-public and semi-private places, like the neighborhood bar, the often-walked public street, the school PTA meeting and the church dinner.

One characteristic of modern life is an increased emphasis on physical and social isolation and the private sphere, with an attendant loss of, and a mourning for, both Public life and Community life, which critics often lump together. The distinction between Public and Community life is important, because they operate at very different scales and densities; each has different

purposes, mechanisms and customs; each requires different physical environments in order to be robust. To mistake one for another makes it easy to create a good design for the wrong purpose. Public life and Community life may be especially easy to confuse because many of us now have little of either (and therefore wouldn't much know the difference) and our mourning may be generic enough to mistakenly collapse the two into one generic form.

New Urbanism speaks of itself as a rediscovery of planning traditions, gleaned from analyses of highly livable, well-scaled and memorable communities, particularly the "traditional American town," and it "borrows from many traditions and theories: from the romantic environmentalism of Ruskin to the City Beautiful Movement, from the medieval urbanism of Sitte to the Garden Cities of Europe, from streetcar suburbs to the traditional towns of America." Calthorpe's brand of New Urbanism calls for region-knitting transit-oriented developments (TODs) small enough to be comfortable for walking and big enough to offer reasons to walk—to shops, neighbors, work, a village green and a transit stop that connects TODs to other TODs and to larger urban centers.[2]

A key concept in Calthorpe's TOD guidelines is centrally-located, pedestrian-accessible public places in the forms of "parks, plazas and civic buildings" and the less formal "village green" or "commons." These are, largely, the physical forms of classical Public life (life with a changing diversity of strangers). But on a closer reading of the guidelines, Public life with strangers is not what really seems to be desired or envisioned. Community life is. Further, when you calculate the population of a TOD, it seems highly improbable that there would be enough bodies, or diversity, to have a Public life with strangers.

In the guidelines, the Public life is not much described, only the places are. But the few descriptive phrases about Public life make it clear

that the social relationships to be supported are actually Community or parochial life: "village greens where workers meet during lunch time and shoppers see their neighbors." All the place-forms recommended for public use, even parks, are clearly intended for Community life. "Parks and plazas in TODs act as neighborhood meeting places, recreational activity centers, child-care facilities and lunch-time picnic spots."[3]

It seems like a mismatch between many of the proposed place-types and desired place-behavior. The behavior desired is about neighboring; about relationships with shop keepers that are more than merely economic; about kids playing, safely watched, in small local parks; about the nodding and chatting happening between those strolling on pedestrian-scaled streets and adjacent porches; about everyday local use by people who know each other somewhat. Yet the forms often called for are those of public, civic specialness of the plaza and park. The guidelines ask for vistas, even calling for public buildings to "be proudly located."[4]

Misappropriating these forms may well stunt the real contributions New Urbanism can make to revitalizing precious Community life, one of its clear goals. A piece of important work for us all would be to seek more appropriate forms, by understanding Community life more fully (and how it differs from Public life), in some joint effort by those in psychology, sociology, anthropology, urban design and landscape architecture, and by citizens.

Calthorpe and others call for a new approach to the forms, variety and marketing of dwelling units and for a new approach to organizing the time-space-use and scalar relationships among the various components of TODs. In the same way, might we not also re-envision the physical forms for Community life to include forms other than the park, plaza, village green, commons and proudly located civic building, forms from an earlier public tradition we seem to hold on to so

dearly? Could the same level of thought and openness to innovative concepts be brought to full spectrum of urban social relationships (and places for them)?

Some may argue that some of this full spectrum of relationships in the New Urbs will just happen over time in found or unused space that groups might appropriate when needed. But since the New Urbs are fully planned from their beginnings, and are spatially tight, there will be few unused (or partially used) fragments which can be spontaneously taken over by groups for special and changing Community uses. So, appropriate places must be provided for this Community life. The New Urbs must, in the beginning, plan for, and seek good locations for places that support Community life. These may include planned locations for the flea market (the streets in a TOD are too narrow), a shell for local bands, community gardens, bleachers abutting outdoor basketball courts, skateboarders' waves, and, as well, recognizing new uses for known typologies, like shopping malls which become de-facto community centers, with the mall's center space given over to bake sales and pamphleteering for local institutions and causes. And surely further analysis will provide more place concepts for supporting community life, in addition to those now planned.

The Search for Public Life

But what of that form of Public life that involves a shifting diversity of strangers? Why is it seemingly missing from these TODs?

Calthorpe bemoans the loss of much of Public life: "Today the public world is shrunken and fractured."[5] So do many other writers, designers, social critics and citizens. They are right. We do have emptier plazas, parks and streets. Calthorpe assumes this relates to the loss of good public space being displaced by an exaggerated private domain and he criticizes most current plans and designs for their poorly conceived public space.

He offers supposedly better designs, and the assumption is, if only we did the spaces right, we would have good Public life.

Like in the film *Field of Dreams*, a dearly held assumption of designers, developers and civic leaders is "if you build it, they will come." Of course, we do build public spaces and people don't come. Still, we think, if we only made public spaces nicer, smaller, bigger, more local, more central, have more jugglers and mimes, be more picturesque, more something!, people would surely come.

There are several problems with this assumption. TODs are generally planned with a maximum radius of 2,000 feet from a central transit stop (or just a center), so that any home is within an easy ten-minute walk of transit and the center. Combining this ten-minute walk with the 18 dwelling units per acre (the recommended TOD average), you'd get about 8,000 to 10,000 people. Lyn Lofland's excellent book about Public life, *A World of Strangers*, traces the conditions necessary for the growth of Public life with strangers, and states that "a population of 8,000 to 10,000 is a lower limit" for a settlement to develop any Public life. Consequently, a TOD is probably too small to generate the number of people, not to mention the structural and temporal diversity, that real Public life requires. And they have relatively stable and economically homogenous populations, generating a fairly common value system.

My sense is that the TOD guidelines simply reflect the feelings of most Americans, who for a long time have not really wanted Public life in any sense. It's too troublesome, too fractious, not always safe or comfortable, too much a problem for the developers, too possible to have in-your-face difference to make everybody happy.

These popular feelings are mirrored in recent academic discourse about urbanity, much of which has focused on the pathology of urban life, comparing it negatively with Community life, which often seems more desirable and is treated as if it were an alternative to Public life. This discourse builds on attacks on the city and its Public life (going back several hundred years) by proponents of both the private and parochial realms. They claim that these realms are, somehow, morally superior and that Public life is morally deficient for three reasons: the presence of the "unholy and the unwashed" stranger; indiscriminate and inappropriate mixing of classes, genders and races; and excessive frivolity.

The evils of the city and its impersonal Public life have often been contrasted with the countryside's pastoral neighborliness. All projects in Calthorpe's book show a "village green" at their center, a pastoral center rather than an urban one. Galen Cranz, in her fine book, *The Politics of Park Design*, says "parks that Americans built to improve their cities derived not from European urban models but from an anti-urban ideal that dwelt on the traditional relief from the evils of the city to escape to the country." Mark Girouard points out that the Garden City, City Beautiful and Modern movements were very different, but all united in their condemnation of high-density, closely knit cities. Calthorpe's avowed precedents, and his use of the park, village green and commons as the center, is in this tradition.[6]

In truth, we've never had much Public life in the U.S: We've not had the population density (England and Italy are ten times as dense) nor popular desire, nor the physical forms nor the socio-economic structure to support it. Many of the somewhat empty public places we have built were designed for what America doesn't have: a diverse, democratic and classless public, and they don't really fit the Public life that we actually do have in our more segmented, pluralistic and stratified society.

Our vision of Public life is partly an illusion, sustained by period movies; by the travel, history, restoration and theme park industries; and by the

penchant for world-traveling elites to be forever charmed by Italy's piazzas, while not recognizing them as part of a non-transportable social ecology. Ironically, tourists in Europe now see only a shadow of what once was, for Public life there has been undergoing a transformation for several centuries. Over one hundred years ago, Camillo Sitte, many people's favorite city planner, wrote: "the life of the common people has for centuries been steadily withdrawing from public squares, and especially so in recent times."[7]

Just as we tend to mourn the loss of a Public life that probably never was as prevalent here as we imagine, we may be blinded to alternative visions and venues for Public life that are emerging, and have made little headway in design and planning for them. More specifically:

We tend to overlook some of our Public life. Modern urban life still shapes public concepts of governance, religion and social structure, and still depends on the exchange of news and information. There is still a Public life of vigorous discourse about politics, morality and religion, but much has moved away from traditional public places and away from direct face-to-face interaction with other citizens. Much of it is in the virtual space of electronic communications radio, television and the Internet.

We do not honor some of the Public life that we do recognize because it is not for purposes we esteem, or not for everybody. The Public life that still occurs in public places tends to involve the theatrical or expressive components of Public life. These include spectacle, entertainment and pleasure, the testing of social behavior and the consumption of the objects of commerce and trade—often wedded together in a theater of consumption. Because they are more easily seen, these forms have come to be perceived as the dominant aspects of Public life, which is now increasingly visual.

There is an enhanced Public life of rich presentation (and counter-presentation) by expressive urban subcultures (punks, skateboarders, Euro-trash, goths, bikers). It is not always to everyone's taste, not always safe or comfortable, but highly important to those who participate and, often, a source of fascination for those who don't. Such expressions act as a school for social learning in which people test personas in public, gauge reactions, modify behavior and grow in complexity as individuals.

We discount the Public life that happens in spaces that are not publicly owned, and which are not the classical open spaces of the dense street, the enclosed square and the verdant park. Examples of these somewhat discounted venues for Public life include the strip, shopping malls, the atriums of skyscrapers, skyway systems, casinos, sports arenas, county fairs, amusement parks, racetracks, abandoned highway fragments, parking lots, community gardens, boardwalks and beaches. Because of their scale and their tight pre-planning, most of these are, of necessity, missing from the New Urbs.

What We Lose When True Public Life Disappears

Some of our nostalgia and mourning is not for Public life at all, not for the world of strangers; it is for something quite different, real and precious: local neighborhood life, community, a world of neighbors and friends, the parochial realm. This is really what the New Urbanism wants to recreate and enliven, and that is truly good.

But what do we lose when we don't cultivate our Public life, this important form of social relationships with a diversity of strangers?

We lose an important factor in the growth of individuals, in a culture that values individualism. The oldest forms of being with others are matedness, kin and tribe, and community. These are primary networks, all of which, through "personal knowing," exert great control over behavior and development, where conformity is expected, supported and rewarded, and the strangeness of strangerhood is suspect.

In such a situation, there is not Public life, which only becomes possible with dense, large settlement with great diversity within it and a changing population and is thus relatively recent. Because Public life is life with strangers in places outside the home and locale, it frees individuals from the social control of tight-knit groups, providing an alternative venue for alternative social learning, thus further weakening the social control of these tight-knit groups over individuals. As this process happens, Public life becomes more attractive, more informative, more theatrical.

We lose a focus of opposition to the power of the state and the corporation. Family and community are not the only social controls. The state has sole access to the legal forms of violence (military, police, courts, jails) and still exercises great control over supposedly free individuals. The corporation can engage in actions seen as economic violence.

And with this creation of the modern state and corporation, the public sphere is that realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed, which enables public criticism by a body of citizens in relation to the state and corporation. Here, the state, corporation and the public sphere confront one another as opponents. This can only happen when citizens have and welcome a wide diversity of opinions, can confer in an unrestricted fashion, have freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of expression and publication of these opinions.

If Public life offers a freeing from control by the social structure of kin, neighbors, institutions and the state, it is also a social leveler, an equalizer of power inequities, at least temporarily and locationally, and because access is relatively free, it is a generally accessible freedom.

We lose the marvel of the stranger. Given the human desire to experience the remarkable, time spent with strangers free from social control offers a situation in which we can seek and find the extraordinary, with some, but not great, risk.

Public life offers a spectacle of strangeness, a celebration of possibility and an offering of a wide array of possible models for behavior.

In Public life, we can even become the stranger to others. In public, there is anonymity and freedom to play and to play act, to construct a personal mythos, to test what-if and engage in make-believe, all prerequisites to transformation testing.

The Public life we are losing seems to offer the following opportunities that Community life does not and that TODs can't easily offer:

• *Shaping public concepts of governance, religion and social structure, opposing institutions of power where appropriate, and taking group action.*

• *Exchanging news and information, finding out what is happening in other than local situations.*

• *Getting pleasure by being actor and/or audience for public spectacle and entertainment.*

• *Being a school for social learning, using Public life as a transformative text.*

• *Being expressive, where your actions matter.*

• *Learning of civility towards diversity, a critical form of tolerance.*

Prospects for the New Urbs

In the TODs of New Urbanism (and even in the economically stratified inner city New Urbs), there will be more Community life than now, and perhaps that Community life will be richer than it is in much of suburbia now. This will be only partly an outcome of the New Urbanism, because it is also driven by a set of long-term forces now affecting most suburban communities, forces that may well propel or be accelerated by New Urbanism.

These forces are driven largely by technologies and networks that spatially uncouple work and, increasingly, commerce, from metropolitan centers, enabling white-collar workers to work from their homes, close-to-home neighborhood satellite offices and the TODs of the New Urbanism without going downtown. With corporate

downsizing, there is also a substantial increase in outsourcing, with highly skilled, white-collar temporary employees often working from their homes.

This increases the daytime presence of adults in the community, many of whom have flexibility in their work schedules. With the rise of telecommuting, enabling work-at-a-distance, there are fewer corporate-driven household relocations. People live in one community longer, and this longer-tenured population becomes more involved in Community life and less relocation turnover means fewer strangers. This more-involved presence attracts more and higher-quality retail, food, entertainment and professional services, and suburbs (or the New Urbs) become more like full-service, rather than bedroom, communities.

But what about Public life? In the New Urbs too much is missing to have a Public life of much diversity with strangers. As the central business district's white-collar workforce declines, the city core's share of poverty continues to increase. Service workers employed in suburbia can't afford to live where their work is, and must commute now from the affordable, though deteriorating city core. As class, geographic and economic stratification increases, strangerhood decreases and a more homogenous system of values reigns. Exclusionary practices continue, with more communities advertised as physically gated and guarded, as well as having the "virtual" gate of housing non-affordability.

All this is happening now. The prognosis for an enhanced Community life (parochial life) in the New Urbanism is good, but for Public life it is bad, both in the New Urbanism and the old city core, offering an even narrower band of social relationships than we have now.

Calthorpe's work, and New Urbanism in general, are welcome departures from our unexamined planning assumptions and norms. My concern is that Calthorpe's avowed historic precedents and sources (traditional American town, City Beautiful Movement, Europe's Garden Cities, Ruskin's romanticism, medieval urbanism, streetcar suburbs) inform but also deflect the search for appropriate and vital visions for Community life in the New Urbs. In discussing the pitfalls of easy historicism in design for Public life today, Gutman asks the critical question: "What does one do to compensate for the possibility that radical new forms of social life are constantly developing, perhaps so radical that no reasonable adaptations and adjustments in the stock of typologies will be adequate for dealing with them?"[8]

Notes

1. Peter Calthorpe, *The Next American Metropolis* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 23.
2. Ibid., 21, 15.
3. Ibid., 92, 90.
4. Ibid., 23.
5. Ibid., 23.
6. Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 4; Mark Girouard, *Cities and People* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 379.
7. Camillo Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, George Collins and Christine Collins (trans.) (New York: Random House, 1965)
8. Robert Gutman, "The Street Generation," in Stanford Anderson (Ed.), *On Streets* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986)

The High Line

Photographs by Joel Sternfeld

The former New York Central Railroad elevated freight route that runs through the west side of lower Manhattan has the potential for being an unusual public amenity. Now owned by the city, the Chelsea High Line is a once-utilitarian structure that has become, although raised thirty feet in the air and neglected, a recreational walkway. It wanders through the city street grid with the same quirky assurance as Broadway, offering unusual vantage points from which to view and discover the surrounding city.

11th Avenue and 30th Street looking east, Spring

Photographer Joel Sternfeld has been documenting this mile-and-a-third long aerie for several years. He began when the Canadian Centre for Architecture, familiar with his work photographing the Campagna Romana, asked him to explore the area in conjunction with an urban design competition it was organizing for the West Side Rail Yards, around which the High Line loops.

Viewers of Sternfeld's pictures are often drawn to the layering and juxtapositions of urban form that being a few stories above street level reveals. But Sternfeld is just as apt to take pleasure in the unexpected layering and juxtaposition of time that one encounters in a place that has been largely left fallow in the midst of an ever-changing city. There is the cycling of seasons; the lethargy of a littered beer bottle that Sternfeld rediscovers, untouched, months after he first photographs it; the bushes blossoming in front of a sign for a defunct dot-com business painted on the wall of a building; a tended garden near a wild glade of ailianthus.

11th Avenue and 30th Street looking east, Summer

The question of what kind of public amenity this place might be does not have a simple answer. The owners of the property through which the viaduct passes would just as soon have it torn down. Some observers believe this industrial artifact can generate distinctive recreational and commercial life along its route. The success of such a project would depend upon a partnership between public and private organizations, perhaps in creating a non-profit entity to operate this uncommon resource. To that end, a growing number of civic leaders and design professionals have lent their support to a non-profit group, Friends of the High Line, which is advocating that the structure be retained, refurbished and returned to the people of the city as singular open space.

11th Avenue and 30th Street looking east, Fall

Sternfeld has a subtler, potentially bolder, vision. He would like to see the High Line remain as it is—less in the spirit of Paris' Promenade Plantée, more in the spirit of a "railroad ruin" or a "time landscape," as he puts it. It is possible to find other time landscapes in a city such as New York, but none that offer the same quixotic combination of detachment and engagement— qualities that suffuse Sternfeld's carefully studied, carefully controlled, views.

—*Todd W. Bressi and Hugh Hardy*

11th Avenue and 30th Street looking east, Winter

Village Vices: The Contradiction of New Urbanism and Sustainability

Ruth Durack

Over the last twenty years, theory and practice in planning and urban design have been dominated by the search for sustainable development patterns. Fueled by growing public outcry over issues of environmental protection, energy conservation, agricultural preservation, urban sprawl, roadside aesthetics and highway gridlock, sustainability has become the banner around which the forces for change in the way we develop our cities and suburbs are rallying. Perhaps the most powerful of these forces—certainly the most vocal—has been the New Urbanists, whose revival of the traditional village prototype is being enthusiastically adopted as a model of sustainable development.

I suspect, however, that the village and sustainability are inherently contradictory concepts. This suspicion is offered as a polemic, based on neither empirical data nor a comprehensive review of the literature. My purpose is to voice a renegade opinion on the merits of New Urbanism and its dubious claims to sustainability, and to draw attention to an altogether more sustainable alternative that has been explored in a number of recent projects. This alternative accepts a more open, indeterminate urbanism that recognizes discontinuities and inconsistencies as life-affirming opportunities for adaptation and change, offering choices for the future in accordance with the true definition of sustainability.

For the New Urbanists, the village is an appropriate model of sustainable design because of features such as its compact scale and density, fine-grained mix of uses, focus on walking and transit as the primary modes of circulation, and varied housing types that promote a socially diverse population. To achieve its delightful physical qualities and egalitarian ambitions, the New Urbanist village is by necessity a fully planned and regulated environment, fiercely resistant to change and any deviation from the rigid rules that govern its form and function. But it is precisely this inflexibility, which is so important in its struggle for completion as a development enterprise, that is sowing the seeds of the village's ultimate demise.

Since the emergence of New Urbanism as a mainstream urban design concept in the 1980s, the central preoccupation of its adherents has been finding ways to adapt the village form to contemporary development demands and vice versa. But the real issue that these talented practitioners and theorists should be confronting is not how to implement the alluring vision, but whether it actually achieves any of its lofty claims, particularly the overriding objective of sustainability.

It could be that the New Urbanist village is just another seductive, formal prototype that is successfully diverting our attention from the overwhelming challenges of exploding urbanization in a world whose limits we have only recently realized are tangible. Perhaps all this proselytizing about a "new urbanism" and its captivating fantasies of village life is just a way to avoid confronting planning and design issues we are not even sure how to think about, let alone resolve. Rather than working to perfect the village form as a more marketable or accepted development

model, we should be questioning its relevance. Better still, we need to be questioning the utility of prescriptive models altogether in the search for sustainable form.

Admittedly, we cannot accurately evaluate the impacts of New Urbanism until more communities have been built and occupied for a sufficient amount of time. But even without empirical data, there are enough incongruities between the idea of the village and the concept of sustainability to warrant a more cautious review of the progress we are making towards defining sustainable development patterns.

To frame the argument properly, we should begin with the definition of sustainability. Unfortunately—or perhaps inevitably, given the political sweep of the green revolution—the concept of sustainability is routinely reduced to a question of physical survival in an environment of continuing degradation and depletion. As a species, however, we transcended our simple dependence on the environment centuries ago and the question of survival, therefore, has to admit culture in equal part with nature. Incidentally, it is no accident that some of the greenest words of the language maintain "culture" as their root: agriculture, permaculture, aquaculture, etc. In fact, even our interest in the environment as an issue is a cultural construct that has emerged relatively recently, and not without the subjective judgments of a highly politicized controversy. So sustainability must consider the preservation, in some form, of this incredibly complex web of culture, which includes our perceptions of, attitudes towards and operations on the natural environment.

But when we think of sustainability in such broad terms, we have to start wondering exactly what it is that we are seeking to sustain. What are we really trying to preserve in a world where the growth rates of poverty, crime, unemployment, drug abuse, homelessness, racial conflict and just about every other indicator of societal breakdown are rising geometrically? Where in the United States alone, functional illiteracy stands at twenty-five percent? Where terrorism has become a universal form of political protest? Obviously, we should not discount the value of the many beacons of success that have been lit across this country and elsewhere, but in the big picture, we have to admit that they hardly add up to a situation that is unquestionably worth sustaining.

All these horrifying statistics, however, have one thing in common: we tolerate them by choice. With an appropriate political shift and realignment of resources—unlikely, but nonetheless possible—we could choose to be different. And this is, perhaps, the only real quality of our present situation that is undeniably worth sustaining: our ability to make choices, or at least the availability of choices to make. So with a small but significant adjustment to the Bruntland Report's definition, I would suggest that sustainability refers to development that satisfies the choices of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to make choices of their own. [1]

This is precisely the point at which the ideas of sustainability and of the village diverge. A village, by its nature, is a stable, self-perpetuating,

self-sustaining entity. It has boundaries and a limited size, an internal organization that resists revision, a coherent scale and building character that protest the deviant form, and a fragile landscape that is vulnerable to growth. It builds a social network that relies on interwoven destinies, censuring the separatist, the non-participant, the transient. It is, by necessity, a fixed, complete and finished entity, whose greatest enemy is the future. Its very survival requires resistance to change, and physical and social design conspire to preserve the status quo at sometimes quite remarkable human and financial cost.

It is difficult to argue that these characteristics are altogether bad. Perhaps, as Alvin Toffler warned forty-five years ago, the greatest threat to society at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be the acceleration of change. It is certainly hard to maintain that having choices is such a good thing when we have apparently exercised them so poorly. My point is only that if we define sustainability as keeping options open and inviting our children to satisfy their own ambitions, within the same limits of consideration for the next generation, then the village as a model is antithetical to these objectives. And if we want to pay more than lip service to ideas of cultural diversity, environmental justice, freedom of expression, opportunity and democracy, then we have to embrace an open and indeterminate urbanity that allows these qualities to flower.

Pursuing such an alternative would require a radical shift in not only how we define successful urban places, but also how we plan and develop

them. What I am suggesting is not another model; in fact, I reject the very idea of models, of prescribed forms, of fixed intentions, of master plans. Instead, we must adopt a way of thinking about the world that accepts unpredictability, coincidence and the accidental; that delights in diversity, multiplicity and contrast; that embraces change and the exercise of individual choice. Perhaps the best way of putting it is that we must find a way of thinking that concedes to the future, not in an acquiescent or submissive way, but as an act of affirmation and supreme optimism, proffered with sufficient humility to acknowledge that the next generation just may come up with better ideas than ours.

There is nothing particularly new in this sort of world view. It is the basis of much of Eastern philosophy and I suspect it underwrote most of the work on flexibility, adaptability and indeterminate structures in the 1960s. After all, Robert Venturi gave us the operative "C-words": complexity and contradiction, almost forty years ago. But a revival of this kind of thinking has particular relevance to the search for sustainability because of its foundation in the sciences and an extraordinary revolution in the ways that physics and biology are looking at the nature of life and questions of human survival.

In a nutshell, science has discovered that we cannot understand the world by reducing it to its simplest constituent parts and examining the laws under which these parts behave. Instead, we need to see the world as an indivisible system, an interlocking network of relationships and interdepen-

dencies between elements that are themselves indivisible systems of unfathomable complexity. In this slippery world of perpetual flux, there are no beginnings and ends, no givers and receivers, no actors and reactors—just constant accommodation and cooperation between parts. The whole idea of a duality between man and nature disappears; they are just parts of the same co-adaptational system. We therefore have to abandon any notions of an optimal equilibrium state, and even the objective of optimization becomes meaningless, except as a fleeting moment in the endless process of adjustment to a new condition.

So what becomes of planning and design in this churning world of uncontrollable change? Does the purposeful design action become just an exercise in futility? How can we continue to believe in planning as a rational process for achieving defined goals when we now know that even initiating the process changes the conditions we set out to improve?

The point is that this has always been so. The interactive nature of the system has not changed, only our understanding of it. Rather than challenging the necessity to plan, this new understanding challenges us to revise the way we plan, to abandon the search for answers or models, and to find ways to maneuver in a world of indeterminacy.

According to Brian Arthur, an economist at the Santa Fe Institute, the think tank that has initiated most of the research on the nature of chaos, operating in such a world means "...keeping as many options open as possible. You go for viabil-

ity, something that's workable, rather than what's 'optimal' ...What you're trying to do is maximize robustness, or survivability, in the face of an ill-defined future."[2]

For planning and urban design, this translates into foregoing the comprehensive plan in favor of an initial strategic act; defining a beginning, not an end; a housing start, not a neighborhood—something like the tourist whose plans for a six-week tour of Europe only go as far as buying a ticket across the Atlantic. Perhaps Rem Koolhaas puts it best when he talks about urban design as the task of creating potentials. This is an astutely pragmatic idea in its recognition that, besides the selfless offer of opportunity to the future, we are also at liberty to exploit the opportunities we have inherited.

David Leatherbarrow has pointed out three aspects of this kind of indeterminate planning[3] that place it in direct contrast to the closed, fixed form of the village. First, it corresponds to ideas of cultural diversity by resisting any sort of fixed subdivision of a city or region, as well as rigid formal constructs for city and regional development. The village, despite its explicit intentions of diversity, has proven to be a very effective tool for ethnic and economic segregation. As Leatherbarrow aptly recalled, the word "ghetto" derives from the Jewish Quarter in Venice, which had all the elements of the classic urban village.

Second, indeterminate planning has the capacity to tolerate, and even value, the discontinuities that characterize contemporary American cities—what Leatherbarrow calls an "open topography."

These missing teeth are anathema to the village builder, but if we can overcome our preference for the continuous field and the city as a finished artifact, we can recognize the utility of these spaces which can accommodate occasional or temporary events and satisfy unpredictable future needs.

The third advantage of such planning is that it invites true citizen participation in planning and development. The village certainly promotes citizen involvement, but only in the affairs of the village, whose primary concern is its own survival, first by completing, then by maintaining, a pre-established plan. Real participation is more than just a watchdog activity; it requires a kind of planning that demands the continuous attention of future agents and extends to them equal decision-making authority.

There is also a fourth critical advantage of this way of thinking about the city, one that directly addresses the objective of sustainability with new theories on the nature of life and the sustenance of living systems. In his work on artificial life at the Santa Fe Institute, Christopher Langton has offered the compelling idea that life occurs at a point of balance between the forces of order and the forces of disorder, at what he calls "the edge of chaos."[4] The revelation of his work is that life is not an equilibrium condition, but a state of continuous adaptive activity, resisting the equally destructive alternatives of locking into a rigid order or descending into the turbulence of chaos.

For planning and design, this means defining a flexible, shifting decision-making framework that stimulates constant review and revision, rather than a fixed set of rules that defy challenge. While a certain amount of stability or predictability is obviously necessary for society to function, attempting to specify the physical form and functional patterns of our future is potentially a prescription for disaster. What we must do, rather, is establish a process for continual reconsideration and revision of the rules, making choice the only constant and participation an unavoidable obligation.

Probably the most direct expression of this philosophy to date is Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau's proposal for Downsview Park, a 320-acre former military air base in the suburbs of Toronto. To the chagrin of many landscape architects, Koolhaas and Mau won the competition for this major commission with a strategy, not a design, arguing that "the process of landscape planning and development itself, necessarily an open-ended set of complex processes developed over time, was more significant to the urban outcome than was a detailed physical design that would be rendered redundant by subsequent social, economic and cultural developments."[5] It will take fifteen to twenty years before we can evaluate the wisdom of this proposition.

Similarly open-ended and strategic thinking was evident in schemes for an urban park in Cleveland presented by Peter Latz, Anuradha Mathur and Stan Allen (who was also a finalist with James Corner in the Downsview Park competition) during an invitational charrette organized by the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio at the end of April, 2001. All three

recognized the futility of attempting to freeze the future of a complicated urban site and offered decision-making frameworks and initial strategic actions, rather than fixed development plans.

Adopting this kind of open-ended planning requires a determined commitment to ongoing review and modification, or the kind of continuous adaptive activity that characterizes living systems. Accepting indeterminacy and choice demands much more of us than settling for the structures of an immutable order. But if sustainability is to be adopted as a sincere objective, we have to plan and build not only in closer correspondence with nature, but also in recognition of the process of life itself.

Notes

1. See the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), commonly known as the Bruntland Report: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
2. Quoted in M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 333.
3. Presentation at the University of Pennsylvania, 1994.
4. Quoted in Waldrop, 234.
5. Charles Waldheim, "Park = City? The Downsview Park Design Competition," in *Landscape Architecture* 91:3 (March, 2001), 82

Architectures of Globalization

Kirsten Walker

Globalization is a disputed term, packed with a rich and intricate array of interpretive possibilities that, once released, raise important questions about architecture, its institutions and its outcomes. Conventionally, the word "globalization" has been associated with flows of capital, labor, products and ideas that have crossed, challenged and blurred established national boundaries. It often evokes images of a shrinking world, in which accelerating flows of information and travel technology compress time and space in the relationships between world cultures, political economies and the built environment.

Today the idea of the global city, once characterized by nodes of high-rise towers associated with nexuses of capital flows vying for command and control of the world economy, is being reconsidered. With advances in electronic media and telecommunications, people can live simultaneously in both bounded urban public environments as well as highly constructed personal virtual environments. Such virtual connections permit national formations to be maintained across international boundaries, as individuals construct virtual neighborhoods that sustain a life of what theorist Benedict Anderson refers to as "long-distance nationalism."

"Architectures of Globalization," a three-day conference held last fall at the University of California, Berkeley, assembled an interdisciplinary group of critics and theorists to examine the ways in which architecture and the built environment are shaped by, and shape, globalization. The conference shifted the traditional discourse on globalization and architecture from a focus on the architectual object, preferring instead to consider the broad social, economic and political processes that are involved in forming our built environment.

The conference, organized by Greig Crysler, used the themes of places, practices and pedagogies to move the discussion of the "architectures of globalization" from the spaces of flows to points of negotiation and resistance. The discussion drew on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, as well as various analytical approaches that have emerged in response to new configurations of power, knowledge and space that globalization has brought on.

Places

A key issue within the debate on globalization is the topic of place. Much discussion about this subject has involved the consideration of architecture as an agent of the so-called "McDonaldization" phenomenon, in which global flows of trade, capital and ideas are construed as a force that threatens the local. Within this context, place becomes something that is on the verge of being lost to an outside force beyond the control of the people within particular locations.

In his opening comments on place, Crylser suggested that by moving the discussion beyond the simple binaries that oppose the local to the global, and the fixed to the fluid, the idea of place can be recast, becoming not so much a static repository of authentic and rooted culture as a site of contest and contradiction.

Theorist Michel Laguerre effectively argued that the movement of people as "embodied culture," through processes such as forced economic migration and global tourism, makes the association of place with a single, unchanging culture difficult to sustain. Instead, Laguerre used the idea of "poles" to describe the communities in which people are bound together, often within highly accelerated frames of space and time that are alien to their conventional environments. He discussed

how migration not only extends the meaning of place outward, but also disrupts our conventional assumptions about place.

For example, Laguerre said, an individual has the ability to transcend his "ethnopole," a community that comprises people with the same ethnic background and has characteristics relating to an ethnic homeland, and to merge with another pole, such as the "global technopole," a community whose economy is based on high-tech industries and involves designers, programmers and manufacturers around the world. In recognizing the very tenuous and permeable boundaries of these diasporic poles, Laguerre introduced the notion of "spatial scales" to describe how migration between these poles is more than just a system of political and economic flows or an interface between the local and the global: poles are places of continuous change, where social struggle and negotiation take place.

One of the dilemmas architects face today is how, in the context of communities that are increasingly characterized by a mix of races, genders and cultures, architecture can represent the cultural values of a multinational community within a global city. Jim Collins, in his paper, "Between the World Bazaar and the Family Attic: Domestic 'Place' and Globalized Neighborhoods," addressed this question by calling for further examination of how the media, the Internet and consumer catalogues help construct and disseminate images with global currency.

The discussion of his paper highlighted the issue that we, as architects of our own communities, must recognize that images are contested and must continuously question how they are used to shape our built environment. As an example, he described ebiza.com, an Internet site that enables people to purchase objects from around the world, to highlight how moden technology has created a virtual bazaar of global images that can be accessed within the domestic setting, rather than through foreign travel. These objects, acquired via the Internet, now represent fashionable taste, an international decor that bears little relevance to geographical borders or wordly experience. In order to constitute what a sense of place might be within such a global culture, we must be conscious of the extent to which our thinking has been colored by the diverse forms of global imageability.

Practices

The second panel, on architectural practices, explored globalization within the context of knowledge and power within professional structures. Crysler framed the discussion by noting that architectural theory has traditionally focused on architectural objects, and that architecture critics have left largely unexamined the global chain of productive relations that is embedded within the structures and materials of our buildings.

During the 1980s, Kenneth Frampton, in his writings on critical regionalism, voiced concern over the relentless and universal transformation of the built environment that has resulted from the use of optimized technology in the manufacturing of building elements. This technology results directly from issues of time–space compression: as people, information and goods become more mobile, they are subjected to fiercer economic and social competition, which often results in a more poorly produced product.

Dana Cuff, in her discussion "Scales of Practice: Architecture in the Global Economy," specifically addressed contradictions found in the discussion of architectural regionalism and architectural localism, being particularly skeptical about Frampton's ideas on critical regionalism in a time when architectural practice is becoming increasingly global. According to Frampton, the fundamental strategy of critical regionalism is to attain, as economically as possible, a balance

between elements that are universal and those derived from a particular place, in order to give the architecture a unique and independent identity.

Cuff argued that, in retrospect, Frampton underestimated the powerful effect that the global economy would have on local economies, and local architecture. She cited Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Musem in Bilbao as a case in point, comparing Gehry's signature style to a fashion designer's label on a handbag. Architectural branding, she suggested, has become embedded within both the design and materials of our built environment. Indeed, Gehry and the Guggenheim have proven that "archi-tourism" can create a tourist destination out of an industrial wasteland.

Like Cuff, Ellen Dunham-Jones viewed the restructuring of practice in an ambivalent and contradictory light. For Dunham-Jones, while networking rationalizes architectural production in a way that may contribute to modular landscapes of sprawl, it also opens new possibilities for participatory design that connect communities through "tele-democracy."

Kris Olds analyzed practice at the scale of global mega-projects, or the transformation of entire quadrants, even cities, through massive building projects that sometimes involve the movement of thousands of people. These projects call into question the ethics of architectural practice at such a scale, when architects' efforts contribute to such large-scale displacement of people, culture and local economies.

Pedagogies

The third session examined philosophies of teaching architecture in a global context. Typically, questions about pedagogy and globalization have focused on the European teaching approaches around which American architectural academies are organized. Currently, this hegemony is being challenged by the rapidly changing demography of higher education, opening debates about what might be referred to as a "world space" within the more progressive quarters of academia.

There has been a call for a new and critical pedagogy that engages architectural education with this new global context. The term "critical pedagogy" is associated with a specific approach to teaching advocated in the 1970s by Paulo Freire, who argued that giving a voice to oppressed, marginalized groups could help construct a new vision of the future. The challenge today is incorporating self-reflective analyses of globalization within the context of conventional and formal approaches to architectural studio education, which are based on Modernist (male, caucasian and ethnocentric) canonical paradigms derived from European architectural practices.

Lesley Lokko, who practices an approach similar to critical pedagogy at Kingston University, discussed the ways in which national cultures appear and disappear according to time and place. Lokko's course, aimed specifically at post-professional architecture students, explores, through a series of design problems, issues of race, gender and cultural identity, which she regards as central to the process of architectural design investigation. The goal of the course is to recognize whose identities find lasting architectural expression.

Grant Kester, in a parallel debate on the sensual inherent within the political, critiqued what he called a "pre-social domain of personal autonomy and self-expression." His paper implicitly addressed the role of theory in architectural education, revealing the problems of retreating into the "space of the body" as a privileged site of aesthetic experience.

Within architectural studio programs, Kester explained, sensual experiences find their realization organized around abstractions of the phenomenal body. Based on the abstraction and spatial rigidity of the plan, a rational concept

evolved from the Renaissance and the fundamentally poetic process of form-making, Kester argues, the resistance of architectural practice is measured by the designer's capacity to disturb or disrupt the rationality of building. This can occur through the use of amorphous rather than linear forms, in the employment of more organic, texturally complex materials, and in challenging the relationship between the inside and outside of a building.

Even in studios that focus on specificity over abstraction, the tendency is to universalize the body that moves through unique spaces. The body, unmarked by differences in race, gender or class, becomes a prototype of sameness in one's experience of light, space, air and form. Kester argued that the process of design requires a greater understanding of the relationship between somatic experience and theoretical reflection on how we understand and situate ourselves within a variety of socially, economically and politically constructed images.

Crylser further commented that globalization offers an array of embodied aesthetic experiences that occur within, rather than in opposition to, the expanding space of a capitalist world system. It is a system whose multiple scales and complexities are sometimes impossible to see or feel in any concrete manner, but which nevertheless exert enormous influence in determining the limits and possibilities of our lives. Grant argued that this form of understanding should find its place in architectural education, for if theory were permitted to reflect more on specific affiliations between architecture and power on a global scale, it would further allow practices to be more receptive to change.

The Secret Tools of New Urbanism

Steven Bodzin

New Urbanists are held together by more than the Charter of the New Urbanism. The people who are attracted to this movement, and those who prosper in it, share an urbanist sensibility. But where does that sensibility come from? Why do thousands of people advocate an affirmative new urbanism, rather than defending their towns with defensive NIMBYism?

Throughout the industrialized world, urban sprawl is seen as ugly, depressing, and destructive. Since the 1960s, most suburban anti-sprawl activism has taken the form of no-growth referenda, open space preservation, and demands for lower densities in new development. In the cities, various urban activists have attempted to preserve historic neighborhoods, prevent depopulation and prevent megaprojects from overwhelming mixed-use neighborhoods.

On their own, opposition to sprawl and so-called urban renewal projects do not create New Urbanism. There are other ingredients that go into a person's awareness for them to recognize not only what they oppose, but also what they support. And not only do people need to learn to support good urbanism in their own area, they need to understand how their community fits into a region, in which a whole range of urban forms can work together.

I recently asked five prominent New Urbanists how they went from being angry at bad development to being designers of something better. What motivated them to make the next step, into an affirmative movement with a vision of something better? The six have had very different lives and represent a diverse range of interests. Yet the same ingredients showed up on many lists: Travel, trained visual sense, and patience.

Travel

The single most recommended item for students of urbanism is travel. Having visited real places gives a planner a valuable tool. "Nobody can say Charleston doesn't work," says Andres Duany, principal at Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company. "I've been there. I've measured it. It works."

For the advanced development of urbanist tastes, Robert Davis, developer of Seaside, Florida, recommends Europe above all. "Start with Rome," he says. "The oldest and greatest city." In Rome, one can see the attempts of Renaissance popes and others to transform a medieval warren into a legible city.

Elsewhere in Italy, one can find the remains of the Ideal City movement, which Davis credits as "Perhaps the oldest antecedent to New Urbanism." He recommends Pienza, in particular, as a city that followed the Ideal City tenets in an infill context. "It had to face the constraints of politics," he says, "But the result is more interesting than the greenfield projects of the same period."

Stefanos Polyzoides of Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists, and Chairman of the Congress for the New Urbanism, credits his experiences as a child in Athens, Greece for his confidence in good urbanism. "I saw 60,000 people in a stadium without parking," he says. "I saw the advantages of compactness and excellent neighborhood structure."

In America, Davis recommends a historical tour of Chicago. "We are in much the same pickle as our forebears were in 100-odd years ago, when industrial cities had grown at an astounding rate. It was a mess of inadequate infrastructure and ugliness, inhospitable for habitation. City Beautiful was posited and acted upon for 40 years,

Visiting places where urbanism has flourished, and observing them and measuring them, can inform a New Urbanist sensibility and practice. These sketches record traditional spaces and housing types in New Mexico.

Courtesy Stefanos Polyzoides

transforming the cities." Alongside the results of Chicago's City Beautiful movement are today's urban success stories, like the replacement of high-rise housing projects with low-rise townhouse developments.

Stephanie Bothwell, chair of cnu's Design Task Force, recommends a visit to New England villages. "They were designed by people who had a language of design. We've lost that, and New Urbanism offers to get it back." She invites visitors to think about how the buildings got to where they are, and how their materials were chosen. "These people came from England, but they did not impose England on the new land. For example, they replaced stone with local wood."

For Americans, Duany recommends four old settlements on the East Coast. "If you are developing a hamlet, go see Waterford, Virginia. To see a village, go to Nantucket. The best town is Alexandria. The best American city is Washington, or Boston's Back Bay. These places give you the appropriate distances, scales, building setbacks, tree spacings."

Eye Training

All of the designers interviewed for this story agreed that urban design requires visual training beyond that of conventional architectural practice. New Urbanists need an intuitive grasp of quantities and dimensions: How far apart should street trees be? How many lots per acre is appropriate for a hamlet? For an infill townhome neighborhood? What is the proper scale of a public square? How frequently should doorways show up on a pedestrian shopping street?

Developing this sense requires getting out and measuring the real world. Some items to record are the lots per acre, the distance between doorways, sidewalk widths, street lane widths, tree spacing.

"Planners can have the kind of certainty that is expected of a doctor. That certainty comes from visiting and measuring," says Duany.

Ellen Dunham-Jones, professor of architecture at Georgia Tech, says, "You must recognize urban structure not just the buildings as objects, but also the shape of outdoor space—the crescent, square, or street. You need a wide-angle lens, rather than architecture's usual zoom lens."

Bothwell says, "You have to be able to see the frame, which is the space between the buildings. But you also have to see what happens in the frame. In Toronto, you see walking, activity, a feeling of urbanity while in San Francisco you might see a quiet residential street."

Patience

Urbanism requires patience in every way. Learning it takes time: Bothwell calls it a lifelong learning process. Building it takes time: "In Playa Vista, it's been ten years since we began, and none of it is on the ground," says Polyzoides. At an even longer time scale, urbanism is never done.

"Architecture, from concept to execution, is usually about a year," he says. "Urbanism takes five to ten years. If you want your work in 30-minute spurts, become a chef."

"Rome," says Davis, "gives courage and confidence about newness and artifice. It gives you a sense of the missing ingredient in New Urbanism, which is time. The city is never done, it's not even seriously begun in a lifetime."

Such patience is necessary for such a long-term reform movement. "I have children," says Polyzoides. "I want to leave them a future with clean air and food, not spending all their money on driving. They should have a sense of place, and institutions that they respect."

Building in Place

Todd W. Bressi

**U.S. General Services Administration
Center for Urban Development**

Federal office and court buildings can play a critical role in the life of a city: they can comprise a sizable percentage of a downtown's office space, often occupy locations of special economic and historic importance, and draw the public downtown, whether to do business with the government, to take part in legal proceedings, or join in a civic event.

Increasingly, however, that space is not in buildings that the federal government owns. Now when federal agencies need new space, GSA is likely to lease it on the open market, or contract for it through what is called a "build-to-suit" or "lease-build" process: In essence, GSA will offer a long-term lease to a private developer who will design and build space to suit the federal government, and will own and manage the building while the federal agency occupies it.

The lease-build process speeds up the government's ability to provide new space for its agencies it is easier for GSA to fund annual lease payments than the upfront cost of new buildings through direct capital appropriations. But the process complicates GSA 's ability to fulfill its mandates for promoting livable communities, since the selection of sites and the design of the building can depend on what developers propose in the bid process.

Nevertheless, GSA staff are becoming successful at melding community planning and livability concerns to the contracting process. In some cases, this means modifying the requests for proposals to make community concerns more explicitly. In others, it means doing upfront planning, sometimes with the selected team, sometimes before a solicitation is ever made,

Cleveland: Criteria for Livability

GSA's Great Lakes Region was one of the first to collaborate with the Center for Urban Development on a lease-build project, in this case for a new FBI building in Cleveland. There, the FBI had outgrown its space in a downtown federal building, and wanted to build a new stand-alone facility nearby.

Regional staff thought that incorporating community livability standards into the "solicitation for offers"—the document that seeks proposals from developers—would result in a project that had a better chance of winning public support. So they asked GSA 's Center for Urban Development to suggest "livability" language that could be included in the formal solicitation, which meant that each developer's proposal would be evaluated, in part, in terms of how well it addressed city concerns. In addition, a community planning consultant to the Center for Urban Development was assigned to the team that interviewed development teams and recommended who the contractor should be.

After the first round of interviews, the selection team met with Cleveland city planning director Hunter Morrison to discuss the city's thoughts about the project. The development teams were also encouraged to meet with city officials themselves, then to incorporate feedback from the selection team and from the city into their final proposals.

Project manager Latrice Robinson said the criteria helped federal staff take a "fresh look" at the project. "When you're working with the FBI, the first thing you think about is security. You're not thinking about how people who are walking over from the federal building is going to access the facility. You're not thinking, 'How does it look to someone who is passing by?'"

The process was also unusual in that the procurement was split into two phases: the first stage involved identifying a site for the building, the

second involved proposals for developing the site. This allowed for better decisions to be made about both the location and the design of the building, Robinson explained. "This eliminated the situation where you have a developer with a great design but a poor site, or a great site but a poor design."

What is not clear, Robinson said, is how to best incorporate the city's concerns into a project such as this. Bringing together potential developers for a workshop at the wrong stage of the process could conflict with provisions that require the proposals to be kept confidential from each other.

Helena: Guidelines and Guidance

For many years, a federal courthouse and office building helped anchor downtown Helena. Now, through close collaboration between GSA's Rocky Mountain Region staff, the city and state government, new federal facilities are helping to anchor a newly emerging part of downtown.

Federal courts and offices in Helena have been located in the heart of downtown for decades, at one end of the city's pedesrian mall. By the late 1990s, though, it was clear those facilities would have to move: the government's lease for the space was coming up and the building did not meet current criteria for seismic safety.

GSA, recognizing that there was little comparable space to lease downtown, began consulting with local officials to evaluate the options. The city identified a site in a newly developing part of town that could accomodate two new buildings for the courts and offices.

To develop the "soliciation for offers" that would be used to find a developer for the site, GSA continued its collaboration with local officials. The city hired a local architect who worked with GSA and city staff to develop design guidelines for the site, which were incorporated into the request for proposals sent out to developers.

When the responses came in, the city was consulted, too. "We had a peer review from people in Helena, architects, so they could come in and review the design guidelines we were establishing," said project manager Lynne Jones. "As we got offers in from different developers, we would

carry them up to Helena and gather a team. We'd go over each offer to make sure it met design guidelines, and if it didn't, why not. We did the same thing when the best and final offer came in, and when we were ready to award the contract."

At the same time it was searching for a developer, GSA convened the community to address how the federal buildings would connect to other development that had occured in the area or was on the drawing boards. City economic development director Michael Barrows said he wanted to talk about getting art between these buildings, "I said, it looks like you've got an area that needs to be improved. So what started as looking at public art for the alleyway turned into a look at this whole neighborhood."

GSA also had to work to help tenant agencies understand the advantages, and potential, of the new location. "There were mixed emotions about the site. People were concerned about parking, restaurants become an issue. It took a lot of persuasion from the GSA, the developers and the city, to say 'You guys move here and businesses will follow, and there will be parking," Jones said.

Ogden: Long-term Coordination

When you call the Internal Revenue Service to ask a question about your tax return, there's a good chance your call will land in Ogden, Utah, where the IRS maintains one of its largest service centers.

Currently, some 800 employees work in one million square feet of space split between two locations outside the city. The IRS wants to consolidate its operations in one place and to expand, but discovered that doing so on the federal property it occupies just outside the city limits would be problematic. The site, it turns out, is adjacent to a nature center, whose officials were concerned about the impact that a hundreds of new workers and a multi-story building would have on their facility.

Ogden, with a fresh new mayor and economic development director, seized the initiative, offering to find space downtown for the IRS. Though the agency was initially not pleased, it became persuaded that the city would be able to help it

meet its long-term goals for space, and Ogden identified a site that could accommodate 135,000 s.f. of new offices, next to a downtown transit center, and a block or two from a historic district and the city's minor-league baseball stadium.

Once GSA agreed to move to the site the city recommended, GSA held a "partnering session" with local officials and nearby property owners to plan out the development process. "We wanted to comply with as much of what the city wanted as we could," project manager Tammy Eatough said.

That meant making adjustments to ensure communication and follow-through every step of the way. GSA incorporated a range of design considerations in the SFO —from local zoning requirements to site design and landscaping considerations to suggestions for the kinds of materials used in the building. GSA also involved staff from the city and local utilities at a pre-bid conference, to answer developers' questions, and involved a city official on the source selection team.

Once the developer's "best and final offer" was accepted, and negotiations between the developer and the city over control of the site were complete, GSA's Rocky Mountain Region convened a workshop that gathered city staff, local businesses, civic leaders and GSA resource staff to look at the site design more carefully. The group developed recommendations for orienting the building on the site, making the food service accessible to the public as well as IRS workers, public spaces adjacent to the building, and pedestrian connections to the rest of the city.

One critique of the workshop is that it came too late in the process; by the time a developer's "best and final offer" is accepted, basic design considerations such as the template and location of the bulding have already been determined. Indeed, this fall, the region sponsored a second workshop to tackle a series of IRS reolocations that are lively to occur in the next few years. "We were able to make some change, but especially when you're dong someting this drastic to a downtown, it would be better to have more of these discussions upfront, so what you offer will be better suited to the downtown."

Building in Place

The lease-build process changes the dynamics of working with communities in the development of new federal facilities. While GSA has less direct control of a project than it would if the federal government were constructing the building itself, cities have a greater ability to influence projects through conventional redevelopment, zoning and urban design techniques. The projects profiled here indicate that GSA is developing an expanding toolkit of techniques for shaping lease-build projects that support local communities.

Consider siting and design decisions separately. Each of these projects followed, in essence, a two-stage process for identifying a location and contracting for space. Breaking the decision down allows for different levels of impact to be addressed more appropriately—locational decisions, for example, can help reinforce economic patterns or take advantage of transit resources, while site design considerations can help address pedestrian connections and public and employee amenities.

Be as explicit as possible. Including design guidelines or requirements in the GSA's solicitation for offers does not make the contracting process more difficult, field staff consistently report. In fact, in Helena, including city design guidelines in the government solicitation helped establish confidence in the project, Jones said. "They knew the city was on the same page we were. The ground rules were established from the very beginning, and they weren't subjective—a lot of times there is no clear basis for a design not being accepted."

Set the table, and get the right players there. Because of the significant impact federal investment can have in a community, early and frequent communication with local representatives is important. GSA's moves in Helena and Ogden, for example, had critical implications for those downtowns. By communicating its agenda early on, and by collaborating with officials from the city and other public agencies, as well as local businesses, institutions and residents, GSA could make decisions that served both its clients and the localities effecively.

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Daniel Solomon is founder of Solomon E.T.C. Architecture and Urban Design in San Francisco. His work, which focuses on the interaction between the city fabric and the design of housing, has been published worldwide and has received numerous awards. He is a co-founder of the Congress for New Urbanism, and authored the book ReBuilding.

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